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Editor

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The Review of English Studies

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The Review of English Studies

VOL. I, NEW SERIES, NO. 3

JULY 1950

SHAKESPEARE'S ACTORS¹

By S. L. BETHELL

SCHOLARLY investigation has compelled us to modify the romantic conception of Shakespeare as a rustic and untutored 'child of nature'. The same modifying process has been applied more recently to the actors of the period: the raffish, penniless, careless crew who dwelt on the outskirts of the underworld, or at least beyond the pale of respectability, have been resolved into an industrious body of plain citizens who ordered themselves towards one another and to the world in much the same way as the Worshipful Company of Fishmongers. As servants of a great nobleman and later of the king himself Shakespeare's actors had an enviable status. Some of them were men of means and served the community in ecclesiastical or civil offices: Hemminge was sidesman and Condell churchwarden of St. Mary Aldermanbury, reassuring activities for the editors of the First Folio. Some were writers, and one, Burbage, a painter. The old cavalier in the dialogue *Historia Histrionica* (1699) remembered that 'before the wars' the players of the Blackfriars, direct descendants of Shakespeare's fellows, 'were men of grave and sober behaviour'. According to Professor Baldwin's *Organization and Personnel of the Shakespearean Company*,² members of the company dropped out only by retirement or death, so that they had many years of active association. Moreover, they tended to live in the same districts, to marry into one another's families, and to remember one another in their wills—to form, indeed, something of a closed society.

In writing for such a company there were many advantages. Shakespeare had as his instrument a body of decently learned players, sober and responsible men, who had trained together for long years and, no doubt, grown familiar with his aims and methods. And we can be fairly sure that they would be playing to an audience of which a stable nucleus would have followed with interest their chief playwright's development.

¹ This article is based on a paper read at the Shakespeare Association Conference at Stratford-on-Avon in the summer of 1948.

² Princeton, 1927.

Perhaps there were disadvantages also. Shakespeare was limited by the number and capacities of his company. In this connexion two questions require closer investigation than they have yet received. The first concerns casting. Can the casting of the plays be determined and, if so, how far would such knowledge be an aid to the critic? To what extent, for instance, do the plays reflect the personalities or habitual dramatic 'lines' of the actors who first played in them? The second question, which bears on the first, is now just beginning to gain the attention it deserves. What were the methods of Elizabethan acting and how far would a proper understanding of them assist in interpreting the plays? I have no new facts to adduce, but in what follows I wish to re-examine the known facts and various theories based upon them, appealing to the plays themselves against theoretical extravagance; for the plays still provide more reliable data than the scanty external evidence as to casting and acting so far brought forward. It is possible to show that Shakespeare was not so limited by his material resources as is sometimes imagined. Certainly he would not be able to enlarge his cast beyond the numerical limit of his company (with, of course, doubling of minor parts). But if, as I shall suggest, the acting had a strong element of formalism, there would be less need than there is to-day to consider the actors' personalities and special talents in designing their roles. The limitations of his company would in fact do no more than provide a framework for genius, like the small orchestra for Bach or Pope's heroic couplet. As I see it, Shakespeare's situation as a playwright was well-nigh ideal.

I. Casting

Professor Baldwin attempts to determine the successive generations of actors in Shakespeare's company and the parts they played, beginning from five plays with assigned parts (only one before 1626; the others, 1626-32)¹ and various scraps of additional information about casting. He obtains surprisingly full results, but, even granting his axioms, the working out of his thesis involves much daring and dubious speculation:

(a) Mr. Baldwin believes that physical descriptions of characters in Shakespeare's and other plays of the time are direct descriptions of the actors themselves, that even the characters' ages roughly correspond to the ages of the actors taking them.² Professor G. B. Harrison takes the same view.³ So does Mr. Allison Gaw, attempting to trace the minor roles played by John Sincklo.⁴ No doubt there is some truth in this. We are a little surprised to find Hamlet 'fat and scant of breath' and it seems likely that

¹ Op. cit., p. 175.

² Ibid., p. 180.

³ 'Shakespeare's Actors', *Shakespeare and the Theatre* (Oxford, 1927).

⁴ *Anglia*, xl ix (1926), 289-303.

we should blame Burbage for thus qualifying his romantic perfection. Shakespeare would certainly wish to avoid startling anomalies, and make-up might not have been wholly satisfactory under Globe conditions. Distinctions of tall and short, fair and dark, thin and fat (though a false paunch can be easily added), would be made with an eye to the casting. But less tangible characteristics, a kingly presence, the attribution of great beauty, might well be in the main poetic 'build-up'. Furthermore, the principle of correspondence between the actor's appearance and the part he plays must not be applied without thought. Dr. Harrison has identified among the actors 'the tall thin man with the hatchet face';¹ he is Aguecheek and Cassius—and in *Henry IV* he is Shadow, possibly the Beadle berated by Doll and Mrs. Quickly, and he is Prince Hal! He cannot, however, be the Beadle, for the 1600 quarto happens to supply the actor's name, 'Sincklo', and Sincklo does not seem to have risen above small parts.² But the real error is to cast the hatchet-faced man for Prince Henry on the strength of Falstaff's jocular abuse: 'you tailor's yard, you sheath, you bow-case, you vile standing-tuck'. Any normal man to Falstaff is abnormally thin; there would be less humour in the lines if they really were addressed to an abnormally thin man. And it follows from the whole play that Prince Henry must have been played by some one who could look the part of a warrior-prince and great gentleman. Probably the wildest misapplication of the method comes from Professor Baldwin when he gives Tooley the part of the 'freckle-faced' knight in *The Two Noble Kinsmen* and on the strength of that describes Tooley himself as freckled.³ As the freckles come straight out of Chaucer,⁴ this would be a surprising coincidence.

(b) According to Mr. Baldwin 'each actor had a definite line'.⁵ Thus John Lowin 'is the bluntly humorous, bluff character. To him falls the impolite villain, the gruff counsellor, the plain-spoken friend'.⁶ 'Swanston is supporting villain of the smooth, scheming type.'⁷ In tracing the generations of actors and the parts they played this matter of 'lines' is of primary importance. Mr. G. E. Bentley is at times sceptical of the 'lines' ascribed by Mr. Baldwin to various actors.⁸ I am not, however, concerned with the use of the 'line' as a tool of historical research, but with its implications for Shakespearian criticism. 'For it seems', says Mr. Baldwin, 'that Shakespeare's characters are regularly not only contemporary Englishmen but also the actors for whom he had written them'.⁹ 'The actor', he says later, 'did not strive to be a fictitious person; he strove rather to be himself under fictitious circumstances. Neither he, his audience, nor his age was

¹ Loc. cit., p. 64.

² Gaw, loc. cit., pp. 300-1.

³ Op. cit., pp. 213-14.

⁴ Knight's Tale, A 2169.

⁵ Op. cit., p. 197.

⁷ Ibid., p. 181.

⁶ Ibid., p. 178.

⁹ Op. cit., p. 253.

⁸ *The Jacobean and Caroline Stage* (Oxford, 1941).

interested in psychological presentation, but in represented action. The story was the thing.¹ In Shakespeare's dramatic workmanship 'the company was not fitted to the play, but the play to the company'.² 'His story must contain, or be capable of having inserted, a major part for each major actor in the company; and this part must be in the line of that major actor.'³

If all this is true Shakespeare was much more limited by his actors than has usually been believed. Surely, however, Shakespeare need not have employed all his major actors every time—some of them might have been glad to rest. Surely, also, the influence of playwright and actors would be reciprocal; the company fitted to the play as well as the play to the company. More important is the question of actors' 'lines'. No doubt, then as always, actors would have their special aptitudes and preferences. But if—as I shall later try to show—acting was more formal in those days; if, as is obvious, a good deal of 'character' was conveyed in the verse spoken rather than by naturalistic means; it should follow that the actor would be more and not less capable of changing from one type of role to another. The casting envisaged by Mr. Baldwin is the Hollywood variety; the actor is himself, his own personality is fitted into the story. Mr. Baldwin seems to have in mind only two possible types of characterization: this, and 'psychological presentation', by which I suppose he means the sort of role and the sort of acting we associate with realistic drama such as Ibsen's. I have suggested a third possibility; a more formal or conventional treatment.

Too much insistence on the actor's 'line' can lead to very dangerous anomalies. 'Indeed, when the *Merry Wives* Falstaff was revamped in 1604, it must have been for Lowin, this being in part the reason that he is not the same man as the Falstaff of *Henry IV*'.⁴ This is both too speculative and too easy. Are we to believe that Lowin was so bad an actor—he was a famous one in his time—that the part had to be written down for him? Or that Shakespeare would fail to write at his full capacity in a leading character because of some possible failure in performance? That is not the way of authors, even of dramatic authors. And it is well known that, even in these days when formal acting has been forgotten, great lines will somehow 'act themselves'. For all its appearance of practical theatre-knowledge, this theory of rigid 'lines' is yet another figment of the scholar's imagination. Mr. Baldwin even explains Prospero's injunctions regarding pre-marital chastity by saying that the part of Ferdinand was played by the actor Underwood whose 'line' was the princely rascal.⁵ Underwood also played Florizel, according to Mr. Baldwin's tables. So we are asked to

¹ Baldwin, *op. cit.*, pp. 305–6.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 181.

² *Ibid.*, p. 300.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 304.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 318.

believe, against direct statements in the text to the contrary and against the obvious importance which these two plays attach to the chaste intention of their young lovers, that Florizel and Ferdinand are, after all, a couple of doubtful characters. When the plain findings of criticism and common sense are thus overturned by scholarly hypothesis, it is time to question the hypothesis.

No doubt Shakespeare had his company, their corporate and individual capacities, well in mind as he wrote. He would be limited by their personal appearance to some extent (not important this); by their number (perhaps a salutary restraint); and by the scope of the boy-actor (not really so crippling a restriction, especially with formal acting). But he would surely expect the actor to rise to the part—if only by a decent delivery of the poetry he provided—rather than to impose his own character on the part or to have his own character written in for him. For the parts within any one line (the Burbage heroes or the Armin fools, for instance) are clearly differentiated, and to interpret them by forcing them into the mould of a narrow 'line' is to put the cart before the horse.

Perhaps the most plausible instance of the influence of an actor on Shakespeare is that of Armin succeeding Kemp as principal clown to the company. Simultaneously Shakespeare changes from the rustic, low-life clown to the learned, witty court-jester, who yet either really has or else simulates a touch of the 'natural'—the wits just slightly askew.¹ Armin seems to have been gracious, charming, witty, learned and golden-hearted. He had studied and written about a number of 'naturals' whom he had known or heard of, and must have brought the same loving care to their representation on the stage. Before joining the Chamberlain's men he had appeared as John o' the Hospital in his own play, *The Two Maids of More-clack*—John o' the Hospital was a real person, a natural whom Armin had known and studied. 'Perhaps it was this last performance which decided the Chamberlain's Men to take him on in the place of Will Kemp',² Mr. Gray conjectures. Knowing what we do of Armin, we can understand that Shakespeare might well have 'allowed him the fullest self-expression in his plays',³ and that there might have been an element of collaboration between them: Touchstone's 'tricks and turns of phrase are as much Armine's as Shakespeare's'.⁴ In view of Shakespeare's well-known objection to extempore clowning, this would suggest a friendship between them and a good many discussions. But Armin's case must have been exceptional: the others would scarcely have parallel contributions to make.

¹ The matter has been pleasantly and learnedly discussed by Mr. A. K. Gray, *P.M.L.A.* xlii (1927), 673–85.

² Loc. cit., p. 683.

⁴ Loc. cit., p. 683.

³ Loc. cit., p. 682.

II. *Acting*

The question of Elizabethan acting has received surprisingly little attention in the past. Probably the most valuable contribution to the subject so far is an article by Professor Alfred Harbage.¹ He begins by distinguishing two schools of thought on the subject of Elizabethan acting: those, like Miss Bradbrook, who believe it to have been *formal* and those, like the late Harley Granville-Barker, who believe it to have been *natural*. Two quotations set off the distinction:

This is the general consensus of opinion on Elizabethan acting. There would be comparatively little business, and gesture would be formalised. Conventional movement and heightened delivery would be necessary to carry off dramatic illusion.²

Then from Granville-Barker:

Shakespeare's stagecraft concentrates, and inevitably, upon opportunity for the actor. We think now of the plays themselves; their first audience knew them by their acting; and the development of the actor's art from the agilities and funniments of the clown, and from formal repetition or round-mouthed rhetoric to imaginative interpretation of character by such standards as Hamlet set up for his players, was a factor in the drama's triumph that we now too often ignore.³

Mr. Harbage takes 'imaginative interpretation' as implying a belief that Shakespeare was acted then pretty much as to-day—and that the actor 'created a role', bringing a great deal from his own imaginative endowment to bear upon the raw material provided by the playwright. Though Granville-Barker stressed the actor's 'creative' power, he did not equate Elizabethan and modern acting. Thus he speaks of the Fool in *Lear* as 'a-straddle between play and audience',⁴ a piece of true insight; and of Lear's storm speech he says: 'any actor who should try to speak the lines realistically in the character of a feeble old man would be a fool. There is no realism about it.'⁵ He thus recognized a formal, conventional element. But he does seem to have believed that there was a very wide difference between earlier and later Elizabethan acting, and that the later style was perhaps fundamentally the same as the modern method.⁶ Not wholly unrelated to this is Professor G. B. Harrison's belief that Alleyn represented an older 'ranting' school of acting and Burbage a new style, with Hamlet's

¹ *P.M.L.A.* liv (1939), 685–708.

² *Elizabethan Stage Conditions* (Cambridge, 1932), p. 109. As Mr. Harbage says, it is not 'the general consensus'. I should want to query also the reference to 'dramatic illusion'.

³ *Prefaces to Shakespeare*, First Series (London, 1927), p. xxiv.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 199.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 142.

⁶ 'The general advance was from plays that asked for little more than recitation to plays that were opportunities for acting, for the vivid realising of character in action.' [A Note upon Chapters xx and xxi of *The Elizabethan Stage*, R.E.S. i (1925), 62.]

advice to the players as its manifesto.¹ Mr. Harbage, who takes this, unnecessarily, as implying a change from a formal to a natural style, argues that Hamlet's speech is made up of commonplaces—'holding the mirror up to nature' is a cliché of classical criticism—and maintains that the advice would apply to either formal or natural acting, since the only principles advanced are those of moderation and good taste. Heywood in his *Apology*, after praising similar qualities, goes on to an encomium upon 'the most worthy famous Maister Edward Allen'!² This would suggest that no fundamental innovation marked the rise of Shakespeare and the Chamberlain's men, though in view of what looks like burlesque in Shakespeare and from other evidence (Edmund Gayton in 1654 speaks of the actors at the Fortune and the Red Bull as 'terrible teare-throats')³ it would be safe to assume with Dr. Harrison that the Chamberlain's company was more restrained and in better taste than their rivals—indeed their repertory would demand somewhat different treatment from the 'old favourites' of the middle-class Fortune-Red Bull audience.

If, then, there was no radical change in acting method in our period, what was that method? Mr. Harbage presents the simple alternatives of natural and formal acting. Was the Elizabethan actor natural or formal or was he perhaps—a third possibility not envisaged by Mr. Harbage—a mixture of the two?

External evidence is at times ambiguous:

(i) J. Cocke, in 'A Common Player' (1615), says:

When he doth hold conference upon the stage; and should looke directly in his fellows face; hee turns about his voice into the assembly....

Harbage, though not attaching much weight to this quotation, seems to take it as a mere statement of fact and so as suggesting formal acting. But the comment is made from a *naturalistic* standpoint, and that standpoint must come from somewhere. Harbage understands the title as meaning a 'typical' player, but he has omitted to notice the following, added in the second edition:

... and therefore did I prefix an Epithite of *common*, to distinguish the base and artesse appendants of our city companies, which often times start away into rusticall wanderers and then (like Proteus) start backe again into the Citty number.⁴

So he was describing a *poor* player; the inference being that good players did *not* turn their voices into the assembly.

(ii) The following points were supplied from Edmund Gayton's *Pleasant Notes upon Don Quixot* (1654) by Mr. W. F. McNeir in support of Harbage:⁵

¹ Loc. cit., p. 83.

² Harbage, loc. cit., p. 691.

³ V. inf.

⁴ Chambers, *Elizabethan Stage*, iv. 257.

⁵ P.M.L.A. lvi (1941), 579-83.

(a) A gentleman is described as unexpectedly crowned mock emperor in a college hall:

he was instantly Metamorphoz'd into the stateliest, gravest and commanding soule that ever eye beheld. Taylor acting Arbaces, or Swanston D'Amboys, were shadowes to him; his face, his look, his voice, and all his garb was alter'd. . . .

McNeir says this indicates conventionalized deportment—but surely it means no more than 'stage presence', common to every style of acting.

(b) We have mentioned the Fortune and Red Bull 'teare-throats'—but, again, the term could be applied to any vulgar, unrestrained performance.

(c) Other phrases: 'too passionately and sensibly represented' and 'lively and corporally personated', suggest formal acting to McNeir but would probably apply better to the opposite.

(iii) We have also the well-known *Funerall Elegye* on the death of Burbage:

Oft haue I scene him, leap into the Graue
 Suiting the person, which he seem'd to haue
 Of a sadd Louer, with soe true an Eye
 That theer I would haue sworne, he meant to dye . . .
 How did his speech become him, and his pace,
 Suite with his speech, and euery action grace
 Them both alike, whilst not a woord did fall,
 Without just weight, to ballast itt with all.¹

This looks like *natural* acting and formal *delivery*.

(iv) Compare Flecknoe's description of Burbage (*Discourse of the English Stage*, 1664):

Burbidge . . . was a delightful *Proteus*, so wholly transforming himself into his Part, and putting off himself with his Cloathes, as he never (not so much as in the Tying-house) assum'd himself again until the Play was done; there being as much difference betwixt him and one of our common Actors, as between a Ballad-singer who onely mouths it, and an excellent singer, who knows all his Graces, and can artfully vary and modulate his Voice, even to know how much breath he is to give to every syllable. He had all the parts of an excellent Orator, animating his words with speaking, and Speech with Action; his Auditors being never more delighted then when he spake, nor more sorry then when he held his peace; yet even then he was an excellent Actor still, never falling in his Part when he had done speaking, but with his looks and gesture maintaining it still unto the heighth.

Harbage has an elaborate theory: Flecknoe probably could not remember Burbage well enough to criticize him; he was hitting at Betterton, and perhaps described Betterton under the name of Burbage, 'wounding' him 'with a weapon from his own armoury'.² But Harbage regards Betterton

¹ Nungezer, *A Dictionary of Actors* (New Haven, 1929), pp. 74-5.

² Loc. cit., p. 695.

as a natural actor, and this is in part formal acting that is described (*v.* the comparison with oratory). It seems, in fact, to be a mixture of both.

(v) Harbage builds up the case for formal acting, which he favours, on the preface to *The Cyprian Conqueror, or The Faithless Relict* (still in manuscript):

The other parts of action is in y^e gesture, w^{ch} must be various, as required; as in a sorrowfull parte, y^e head must hang downe; in a proud, y^e head must bee lofty; in an amorous, closed eies, hanging downe lookes, & crossed armes, in a hastie, fumeing, & scratching y^e head &c. . . .

Harbage dates this preface not long after 1633. Regarding it as teaching formal gesture, he goes on to examine later manuals of acting and finds that even through the nineteenth century they remained equally formal—which means that teaching was formal when acting was not. Though this is somewhat disconcerting, Harbage proceeds to argue that in Elizabethan times ‘to an extent never afterwards equalled, acting was taught’.¹ Heywood approves of acting manuals; acting was a part of ordinary education; and there is a constant appeal to classical authority: Horace, Cicero, Quintilian. This is rather thin support for the ‘formal’ theory, since it might well be asserted in reply that in the seventeenth century, as surely in the nineteenth, the usual aim was to teach natural acting² and that it is merely the necessarily generalized descriptions of the various ‘passions’ that sound like formal attitudes: there would be a great difference between naturalism conventionalized by unimaginative teaching and a truly formal acting-style such as that of the *Commedia dell'arte* for example. The next stage of Mr. Harbage’s argument is more cogent. The term ‘action’, we are told, is used throughout the period for acting *and* for oratorical gesture. And Overbury’s (? John Webster’s) character of ‘An Excellent Actor’ (1615) says that ‘Whatsoeuer is commendable in the graue Orator, is most exquisitely perfect in him; for by a full and significant action of body, he charmes our attention’. This association of acting with oratory is, I think, the only compelling argument brought forward by Harbage for the formalism of Elizabethan acting.³ We must remember, however, that all educated conversation in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries would have something of an oratorical air, and that the gap between normal behaviour and stage

¹ Loc. cit., p. 700.

² Mr. Harbage mentions (p. 699) a nineteenth-century manual which distinguishes between ‘Objective’ and ‘Subjective’ gesture. To take this seriously we should need further examples of the distinction and clearer proof that it signifies a distinction between formal and natural. Might it not rather refer to the difference between an explanatory gesture and a representation of involuntary movement? I have not seen the manual, an American one, and cannot decide the matter.

³ Much more evidence for the use of the formal delivery and gestures of oratory in Elizabethan acting will, I understand, shortly be made available by Dr. Bertram Joseph.

behaviour, though wide—for verse was used on the stage—would not be so wide as if the same method were employed to-day. From the evidence I have seen¹ I have no doubt that the formal manner of oratory was used in the Elizabethan theatre. But it is unlikely to have been used exclusively. The external evidence already considered points to *a mixed style, natural and formal*. And this is what I had decided Elizabethan acting must have been, several years before the external arguments were brought to my notice.

I shall now briefly outline my own distinction between naturalistic and conventional drama, which is based on the relationship of actor to audience. Naturalistic drama is easily described. It has its minimal element of convention but aims at simulating real life. To enjoy it the audience must forget external circumstances, forget so far as possible that it is a play they are witnessing, and become wholly absorbed in the action as if it were real life. There is, of course, at the back of the mind a reassuring feeling that it is only a play, but this must not become obtrusive or it will spoil appreciation. The actors in this kind of drama, 'straight drama', pretend to be the people of the story and try to make the audience forget that they are only acting.

The essential difference between naturalistic and conventional drama is that the latter demands of the audience a 'multi-conscious' response. Such a response is made by an unsophisticated audience quite naturally and without strain. What it is, is better illustrated than explained. Examples occur nowadays mainly in popular entertainment. One that I have used elsewhere is so striking that I shall venture to quote myself:

In one of Mr. Harold Lloyd's comedies, a number of years ago, the comedian performed a series of hair-raising evolutions on the front and very near the top of a formidable skyscraper. The audience must have had several concurrent reactions: (a) they would admire the performance of a brilliant 'equilibrist'; (b) they would be amused at his (recognisedly feigned) clumsiness; and (c) they would be concerned for the hero's safety, in sympathy with the heroine watching anxiously from below. The same incident demands attention from three different points of view simultaneously: as equilibrastic performance, as farce, and as romance. And the audience responds in this complex way without effort.²

Fundamental to all multi-consciousness is the dual consciousness of real world and play world. 'Dramatic illusion' must not be complete—or virtually complete—as in naturalism, or the multi-conscious response would be impossible. With complete illusion the reaction to Harold Lloyd on the skyscraper would be one of pure terror.

I have said that multi-consciousness is characteristic of the unsophisticated audience. That does not necessarily imply an unlearned audience or a 'popular' drama, but only a situation in which ideas of naturalism have

¹ Mainly in Dr. Joseph's manuscript works.

² *Shakespeare and the Popular Dramatic Tradition* (London, 1944), p. 28.

not yet assumed psychological control. Shakespeare's plays clearly belong to the category of conventional drama; they demand a multi-conscious response. The audience are even verbally reminded of the coexistence of play world and real world, as in *Love's Labour's Lost*: 'Our wooing doth not end like an old play' (v. ii. 884), or in *As You Like It*, where Jaques makes a hasty exit, commenting on Orlando's opening address to Rosalind:

Orlando: Good day and happiness, dear Rosalind.

Jaques: Nay, then, God b'wi' you, an you talk in blank verse.

(iv. i. 30)

Founded on this dual consciousness of play world and real world is the simultaneous consciousness of past and present, e.g. the contemporary references which abound in plays whose plots are set in an earlier period: Pistol's echoes of the theatre, Macbeth's Porter's knowledge of Jesuit equivocators. Or in the realm of character we may instance Edmund, the Renaissance Machiavel, and Edgar as the Tom o'Bedlam, both contemporary figures introduced into pre-Christian Britain. Similarly the dual consciousness of the player as player and as character lies behind the convention of direct address in, for example, the opening speech of *Richard III* and the Fool's 'prophecy' in *King Lear*. Examples could be indefinitely multiplied.

All this implies a type of acting quite unlike the natural acting of a modern 'straight' play. In the latter the actor ostensibly ignores the audience and endeavours to sustain complete dramatic illusion. The Elizabethan actor must have appealed frankly to the audience from time to time, inviting, as it were, their active co-operation. The whole performance must thus have had a different direction and a different flavour. The nearest modern parallel would be opera, or, better, a comic opera or pantomime. In pantomime the action of the story is interrupted with topical jokes, quite out of period, and with song and dance and vaudeville acts; there are patches of verse as well as quite naturalistic prose dialogue; there are comedians who address themselves directly to the audience—indeed the 'serious' characters may have speeches of self-explanation in the form of direct address.

Even the more extreme musical comedy effects can be paralleled in Elizabethan drama. In *Tarlton's Jests* (1611) it is recorded that in a play about Henry V Tarlton played the Judge, the usual actor being absent, and received the famous box on the ear. Later he came back in his clown's apparel.

O (saith one) hadst thou been here, thou shouldest have seene Prince Henry hit the Judge a terrible box on the eare. What man, said Tarlton, strike a Judge? It is true, yfaith, said the other. No other like, said Tarlton, and it could not but be terrible to the Judge, when the report so terrifies me, that me thinkes the blow remaines still on my cheeke, that it burnes againe.

This deliberate exploding of a fundamental dramatic convention would be impossible for naturalism. Again, in Marston's *Antonio's Revenge* Balurdo appears with only half a beard 'because the tiring man hath not glued on my beard half fast enough'. (To Professor Harrison this is 'an odd lapse of taste').¹

Elizabethan actors were trained not only in speech, but in fencing, dancing, and tumbling. Some years ago Professor Louis B. Wright, in a series of articles in various learned journals, pointed out how every type of vaudeville entertainment was introduced into Elizabethan plays, often with little or no excuse in the plot; singing, dancing, tumbling, juggling, conjuring, even performing animals.² Vaudeville acts occur in Shakespeare, though with him they are made to contribute to the total effect: e.g. the dance of the Saltiers in *The Winter's Tale* and the conjuring in *The Tempest*. Shakespeare did not despise the ever-popular variety entertainment; he used it, transforming it, like everything else he touched, into something rich and strange.

It is therefore evident that an Elizabethan play required the sort of mixed attention to-day given to a pantomime, though on a much higher plane, and that the acting cannot have been continuously naturalistic even apart from vaudeville interruptions, for in a setting of naturalistic acting such interruptions would be intolerable. I suggest that the acting, like the drama itself, was in a mixture of styles. Shakespearian drama has long passages of high poetry and also long passages of colloquial prose; there is formal prose also, demanding a third type of delivery. At times we have short, sharp, realistic exchanges, as with Macbeth and Lady Macbeth after the murder; but more often we get the impression that the characters are, as it were, telling their own story: it is something half-way between narrative and naturalistic presentation. When Lear's sanity begins to fail he does not merely show it indirectly by 'business' and disjointed dialogue; he informs us: 'My wits begin to turn' (III. ii. 67).

It therefore seems likely that (a) the longer verse passages were delivered as formal rhetoric. The modern actor too frequently tries to pretend that it is not verse that he is speaking. But this cannot have been the method of those for whom it is written—or why write in verse? (b) This rhetorical manner was presumably shaded off into something more like naturalism in the shorter exchanges of dialogue and in conversational prose. (Verse and prose could be valuably contrasted as in the deception of Benedick, in prose, and of Beatrice, in verse.) (c) Clowning would be non-naturalistic, Kemp rather like a red-nosed comedian of to-day, Armin like Lytton in Gilbert and Sullivan roles. And (d) a great deal of vaudeville was also in use.

¹ *Elizabethan Plays and Players* (London, 1940), p. 219.

² *P.M.L.A.* xlvi (1927); *M.P.* xxiv (1927); *J.E.G.P.* xxvi (1927); *Anglia*, lii (1928); *Engl. Studien*, lxiii (1928); *J.E.G.P.* xxx (1931).

Because no one had thought of naturalism (it was to grow later out of neo-classicism by an odd reversal), these different modes did not stand out as different; they shaded into one another quite naturally. And the audience accepted the performance on many different planes: the story, the 'inner meaning', the topical references, the vaudeville acts, were all accepted without any sense of conflict.

Such a theatrical tradition gave Shakespeare a far greater opportunity than naturalism would have allowed. Though it survives almost solely in vulgar entertainment, it is the only possible mode for subtle dramatic expression. In naturalistic play-writing the dramatist presents the actors with a mere skeleton—the dialogue, imitated from life—which they have to fill out in order to give an adequate representation to the audience. But Shakespeare was able to express fully and directly in his verse what in naturalism can only be hinted by arduous acting. He was able to be explicit about character—his personages *tell* us what they are; he was able to present an interrelated pattern of social, political, and religious significance in his poetry—all this because the poetry and its decent delivery were the only real essentials of Elizabethan drama. Highly trained actors would be necessary, trained especially in the technique of verse-speaking; but if they had their technical training they would be fairly reliable instruments (in the serious roles, at least) without the additions of 'personality' and 'creativity' demanded to-day. There would be more Shakespeare than Burbage in the Globe *Hamlet*. The modern interpretative acting, in which A's *Hamlet* differs *toto caelo* from B's, is only one symptom of a general disease. This is an age of virtuosi—or perhaps of showmen—not of artists. It is an age of orchestral conductors who impose their meaning upon the work. The Elizabethans were soaked in music but among them the conductor was unknown and the composer got his chance. The theatre, I think, presented a parallel situation. Hence the success of the boy actor. There is no female Lear, which argues that the chief male parts demanded something of the modern 'character actor's' equipment as well as formal excellence, but the existence of such parts as Lady Macbeth and Cleopatra is surely a final proof that the acting of the time was fundamentally formal, however that formality might be shaded by naturalism from time to time. With such a conception of the actor's function and method we might be able not only to understand Shakespeare better, but also to produce him more intelligently. We cannot expect a return to formal rhetoric on the contemporary stage but some modern equivalent might be arrived at, and a revivifying of Shakespearian acting from the music-hall would also help us to come nearer to the plays as Shakespeare meant them to be and therefore to the many-sided profundity of their significance.

THE PRIVATE IMAGERY OF HENRY VAUGHAN

By FRANK KERMODE

ALTHOUGH research has increased the materials available to the critic of Vaughan, certain aspects of his poetry are still obscured by exegetical fallacies which take their origin from unwarranted assumptions about the poet's conversion and his manner of using devotional themes. The object of this essay is to suggest that the conversion was rather a poetic than a religious experience, and to appraise some of the poems as poetry rather than as prayer.¹

Vaughan was a bookish poet; by this I mean that not only was his poetry often imitative, but that his most authentic and individual inspirations were frequently rooted in words and rhythms, and in imagery conventionalized by earlier use, rather than in visual impressions. The conventional description of Vaughan as a 'nature-mystic' is therefore pointless. Like the reluctance to draw the obvious conclusion from Vaughan's use of Herbert, Felltham, Cartwright, Randolph, and his brother Thomas, it is a feature of the romantic conspiracy to redeem the poet from a period cursed with obsolete learning.² Vaughan has in common with Donne the habit of

¹ In his account of the chronology of the poems in *Olor Iscanus* and *Thalia Rediviva*, H. R. Walley [R.E.S. xviii (1942), 27] acquits Vaughan of the charge that the circumstances of publication of the earlier volume make his religious professions appear disingenuous. His argument is substantially accepted by F. E. Hutchinson in his *Henry Vaughan* (Oxford, 1947). But I do not agree with Mr. Walley that, since the unauthorized volume was apparently expurgated (the rejected portions appearing later in *Thalia Rediviva*), Vaughan must have undergone some sort of conversion between 1647 and 1651 (*Olor Iscanus*). That the poems on account of which Vaughan expressed such shame in the Preface to *Silex Scintillans* had not, at the time of writing, been published, is a sensible conjecture. That the injunction to the friendly pirate to refrain from printing them could only have resulted from religious conversion seems extravagant. A purely literary distaste would account for their suppression. There is, of course, a conventional element in the palinode of 1651, as Elizabeth Holmes points out in her *Henry Vaughan and the Hermetic Philosophy* (Oxford, 1932), p. 12. E. L. Marilla has pointed out that all except Grosart have accepted the conversion as having occurred between 1647 and 1650 on inadequate evidence. He suggests that, instead of an intense experience during his illness, we should credit the poet with a gradual development of religious interest which begins to affect the poetry only after 1650. He finds an exterior motivation for the change in politics ['The Religious Conversion of Henry Vaughan', R.E.S. xxi (1945), 14]. No doubt the death of his brother, and a grave illness—'Moriendo revisi'—accelerated Vaughan's progress from aesthetic to ethical maturity. But there is reason to doubt a sudden conversion.

² There is a text in Plotinus to support writers who divide mystics into Love and Beauty Mystics, Devotional Mystics, Nature Mystics, and so forth. This is merely confusing, and no orthodox commentator would allow this terminology [see, for example, D. Knowles, *The English Mystics* (London, 1927), an excellent introduction]. A famous remark of the

making his poems, whatever their true cause, meditations on an idea which may be trivial or which may be obscure, but which can rarely be described as a genuine *aperçu* of his own. But Vaughan differs from the earlier poet in that the range of his fancy is much narrower. By far the most important source of his poetry is the poetry of Herbert, for not only does he borrow theme and vocabulary from Herbert, but very often he owes the germ of a poem to this master, in whom we can study Vaughan's idea, either as a phrase or as a rhythm.

There is a fine example of this dependence in Vaughan's poem 'The Morning-Watch':

O Joyes! Infinite sweetnes! with what flowres,
And shoots of glory, my soul breakes, and buds!¹

The germ of this poem is Herbert's 'The Holy Scriptures' and also his second 'Prayer'. Vaughan's opening lines took shape from a meditation on Herbert's—'Oh Book! infinite sweetnesse! let my heart Suck ev'ry letter. . . .'² For a few words the language, and for a few more, the rhythm, of Vaughan's poem runs parallel to Herbert's. Then the idea is totally altered and becomes Vaughan's own, stamped as his by *shoots of glory*, even before he has broken away from Herbert's rhythmic pattern. He turns, characteristically, from the Book to the Book of Nature. A passage in short lines follows, which is supplied with notions from Vaughan's main reservoir of philosophical imagery, a hermeticism modified to the point where it is scarcely distinguishable from a less doctrinaire microcosmism. But this passage is a bridge to the second idea borrowed from Herbert, which is the main support of the poem. 'O how it *Blouds And Spirits* all my Earth!' is a transmutation, in the curiously abnormal language of a poet striving for individuality, of the close of Herbert's poem 'Prayer': 'Church-bels beyond the starres heard, *the souls blood* . . .'.³ Vaughan then takes up another line from the same poem: 'A kinde of tune, which all things heare and fear.' The musical idea expressed in both these lines gives rise to the central passage in Vaughan's poem:

all is hurl'd
In sacred hymnes, and Order, The great *Chime*
And *Symphony* of nature.

The sequel indicates that this idea must come home to the second of Herbert's lines: 'Prayer is The world in tune.' Vaughan has here developed a

Abbé Bremond which I find it valuable to keep in mind when studying Vaughan is: 'Puisque son essence est de tendre à rejoindre la prière, il va de soi, en bonne métaphysique, que la poésie, dès qu'elle deviendrait prière, ne serait plus poésie' [Prière et Poésie (Paris, 1926), p. 89].

¹ *The Works of Henry Vaughan*, ed. L. C. Martin (Oxford, 1914), ii. 424, and note.

² *The Works of George Herbert*, ed. F. E. Hutchinson (Oxford, 1941), p. 58.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 51. My italics.

favourite idea, that of the *Musica Mundana*; in 'Affliction'¹ he again employs it and again, as Professor Martin has pointed out, the immediate source of the idea is in Herbert. It is not difficult to see that the vast lore of the universal musical correspondences would particularly appeal to Vaughan, committed as he was to a belief in the validity of the specialized micro-cosmism of hermeticism.² In much the same way he saw the potential value of magnetism for poetic imagery. Nevertheless, in both these poems he depends on Herbert for the initial impulse to use the musical metaphor, although he develops it in his own way.

The peculiarity of this mode of imitation indicates, in a somewhat negative way, the authenticity of Vaughan's genius; he owes nothing to Herbert for doctrine or for prose meaning. An original poem has grown out of the sympathetic rhythm of a line from 'The Holy Scriptures' and the artificially disject analogues of 'Prayer'. Having made these his own, Vaughan, persisting in the brusquely opposed long and short lines forced upon him by the nature of the poem's origin, develops the poetic image in his own way, proceeding not from prayer to the universal harmony, but from that harmony to Herbert's 'Prayer', with a verbal reminiscence; thenceforward the poem concerns itself with prayer in language which is once more drawn from other sources than Herbert. It would be difficult to find an example more certain than this of a poem which begins as a rhythm only, and reaches verbal actuality with the aid of ideas of identifiable and bookish origin; yet its dignity and autonomy may be tried upon the pulses.

There is nothing in Vaughan which differentiates him more clearly from Herbert than this curious faculty of adapting words and rhythms to a new and remote idea. It does not, of course, operate constantly; in 'The World', for instance, he develops a given idea much in the manner of his predecessors. But whereas the general misreading of that poem proceeds from the critical error of refusing to treat Vaughan's poetry as poetry so long as it may be treated as prayer, the common complaint that Vaughan is only too often a matter of brilliant moments, 'gleams and fractions'—that he is often disorderly and frequently for long passages unmemorable—has some substance. Only occasionally does the necessary fusion of the alien matter and the personal meditative continuum occur. When it does not, there is left only the shabbiness of plagiarism, the doubtful fascination of ideas unassimilated to poetry expressed in loose and uninteresting verse. Of Vaughan's debt to Herbert, Canon Hutchinson rightly said that 'There is no example in English literature of one poet borrowing so extensively from

¹ Martin, ed. cit. ii. 459.

² For the history of this idea, see L. Spitzer, 'Classical and Christian Ideas of World Harmony—Prolegomena to an Interpretation of the Word "Stimmung"', *Traditio*, ii (1944), 409; iii (1945), 307.

another'.¹ The imitation of Herbert is sometimes mechanical, as one would expect in these circumstances; but when, as in 'The Morning-Watch', it provides the poet with a characteristic theme, tenuous, independent of metaphysical ratiocination, in a word assimilable to the quietly bizarre qualities of his personality, the result is unique. Wanting such a catalyst, his talent is frequently unpurged and discursive. His poems are systems developed from some central literary point. This is true of his use of occult writings, as well as of his debt to English writers.

Vaughan uses the language of the Hermetica, and of the pseudo-Dionysius, not only in *Silex Scintillans* but also in little-read poems written before his supposed conversion, and the use of such language does not, of course, guarantee the value of the poem, though the 'mystical' element in the poet depends upon it. W. O. Clough, indeed, has argued that 'Vaughan uses the Hermetic language . . . when he is less a poet, not more'.² But his use of the terminology is so extensive that this is a very arbitrary determinant. The truth is that he is a poet when he uses the language in a poet's way, which is not the way of the philosopher or the mystic. But this question is evidently involved with his status as a mystical author. I believe there is much that might usefully be said on this point, but I must defer it to some other occasion. For the present it is enough to say that perfection of the life and perfection of the work are often, as by Yeats and the Japanese dramatists, and also by Brémont, held to be antinomies; though this is not to say that literature may not conduce to prayer and the contemplative life.

The distinction is relevant to the study of Vaughan, who must have occupied a place in the devotions of many. Very often he uses language which has previously been used by mystical writers, who are always dependent upon symbol and allegory in their attempts to describe the incommunicable; obviously there is nothing to prevent any non-mystic from adopting their terminology. Vaughan, for example, employs the Dionysian concept of the Divine Dark.

The Divine Dark is naught else but that inaccessible light wherein the Lord is said to dwell. Although it is invisible because of its dazzling splendour and unsearchable because of the abundance of its supernatural brightness, nevertheless, whosoever deserves to see and know God rests therein; and by the very fact that he neither sees nor knows, is truly *in* that which surpasses all truth and all knowledge.³

¹ Hutchinson, op. cit., p. 102. The borrowings from Felltham are also important. The relevant references in Martin's edition have been augmented by the same author in 'Henry Vaughan and "Hermes Trismegistus"', *R.E.S.* xviii (1942), 301 (see the passage concerning 'The World' on p. 307) and by J. Robertson, 'The Use made of Owen Felltham's "Resolves"', *M.L.R.* xxxix (1944), 108.

² 'Henry Vaughan and the Hermetic Philosophy', *P.M.L.A.* xlviii (1933), 1129.

³ *De Mystica Theologia*, i. 1; see E. Underhill, *Mysticism* (London, 1911), p. 347.

This idea, much developed by the mystics, was in Vaughan's mind when he wrote:

There is in God (some say)
A deep but dazzling darkness, as men here
Say it is late and dusky because they
See not all clear;
O for that night! where I in him
Might live invisible and dim.¹

Vaughan is at least not attempting to claim the authority of such a vision. He is working out a conceit which involves the glorification of night—I shall say more of this later—and he is using the theme of the Divine Dark for this purpose, much as another poet might use ideas from scholastic philosophy or Galenist medicine, though in Vaughan the concept acquires a special value from the pattern of ideas, discernible in his poetry, in which it is located. At the moment it is with this purely poetic phenomenon that we are concerned, and it is important not to be misled by the significances of certain of Vaughan's words when used in the context of mystical writing.

Miss Helen White, in her excellent study *The Metaphysical Poets* (New York, 1936), is careful to draw a distinction between poet and mystic, but is wrong, I think, in her view that there are poems which are both poetry and mysticism. It is very doubtful that Vaughan's poetry is any more closely related to his religious experience than Sidney's *Astrophel and Stella* is to his amorous experience. Like Sidney, Vaughan uses a specialized language which is neither original nor to be taken at its face-value; it is, as it were, a cheque drawn on the bank of Hermes Trismegistus.² Vaughan's poem 'The World' has been much admired for what seem to be quite the wrong reasons. It has sometimes been printed as if it were only seven lines long; those lines are taken to be a genuine description of what, without irrever-

¹ Martin, ed. cit. ii. 523.

² Vaughan's relationship with Hermetic writers has been examined by A. C. Judson, 'The Source of Henry Vaughan's Ideas concerning God in Nature', *S.P.*, xxiv (1927); Clough, loc. cit.; Holmes, op. cit.; R. M. Wardle, 'Thomas Vaughan's Influence upon the Poetry of Henry Vaughan', *P.M.L.A.* li (1936). The relationship between the two brothers is further discussed in E. L. Marilla, 'Henry and Thomas Vaughan', *M.L.R.* xxxix (1944); A. C. Judson, loc. cit., shows that Vaughan could have derived from his brother certain doctrines such as that of the Divine Immanence, as well as the Cabballistic doctrine of Divine Energy, the Platonic doctrine of pre-existence, and some ideas of Cornelius Agrippa. L. C. Martin pointed out strong resemblances in some poems to the original Hermetic texts ('Henry Vaughan and "Hermes Trismegistus"'). But there are also parallels with early English mystical writings, such as *The Cloud of Unknowing* and the work of Richard Rolle, which can account for some of the occult features of Vaughan's vocabulary. These works were apparently known and read in Vaughan's time [see R. W. Chambers, *The Continuity of English Prose* (London, 1932)]. It is possible that much characteristically mystical language had been 'softened' into an ordinary vocabulary of devotion, for traces of it may be found in other poets of the period—for example, Quarles, of whom see below. Needless to add, it is not the provenance of these ideas so much as the use Vaughan makes of them in poetry that concerns the critic of that poetry.

ence, may be described as a mystical peep. Vaughan certainly employs imagery which is used by the mystics. The *circle* is a frequently recurring image of this sort, and so is the Dionysian 'ray of darkness'.¹ The circle, or ring, may, as W. O. Clough suggests, combine the function of Hermetic symbol and of the Milky Way and a number of other things.² (It will be remembered that Herbert uses the galaxy as a type of prayer.) Vaughan may have borrowed the idea from Felltham, or from Hermes himself.³ What is certain is that he uses the idea in several other poems, including 'Vanity of Spirit',⁴ 'Ascension-Hymn',⁵ and 'The Queer'.⁶ What is more, he uses it in one of the poems which certainly antedate any conversion, 'To Amoret Walking in a Starry Evening'.⁷ In *The Mount of Olives* Vaughan gives a prose equivalent for his poem in 'A Meditation at the setting of the Sun, or the Souls Elevation to the true light'.

The path of the Just (O my God) is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto a perfect day of eternity, *Prov.* 4. But the wicked neither know, nor understand, they walk in darknesse, and from the inward darknesse of their minds passe at last into the outward, eternal darknesse.⁸

The matter of the poem is devotional; the imagery constantly in use, and derivative. The famous opening lines establish the terms of the rhetorical formula in which the extended conceit is to be worked out. No one is inclined to take literally Vaughan's statement that

I (Alas!)
Was shown one day in a strange glass
That busie commerce kept between
God and his Creatures, though unseen.⁹

Yet this is a very similar observation. Vaughan simply does not supply the form of words proper to the announcement of such a theme. If he had been as straightforward in this matter as Donne, there would be no difficulty.

Let mans Soule be a Spheare, and then, in this,
The intelligence that moves, devotion is.

This is a statement of the same order as Vaughan's at the opening of 'The World'; so, for that matter, is 'If all the sky were paper'.

Eternity as a ring is an old notion; Vaughan equates it with the region of the fixed stars, where the blessed dwell—a *world out of time*, beneath which the corrupt world of nature spins. He ends the poem by expressing the relationship between this ring and God in language which can be paralleled in Suso and Ruysbroeck.¹⁰ The inhabitants of the shadow world, some of

¹ Holmes, op. cit., p. 3.

² Clough, loc. cit., p. 1130.

³ Martin, 'Henry Vaughan and "Hermes Trismegistus"', p. 307.

⁴ Martin, ed. cit. ii. 418.

⁵ Ibid. 482.

⁶ Ibid. 539.

⁷ Ibid. 7.

⁸ Ibid. i. 150-1.

⁹ Ibid. ii. 514.

¹⁰ Underhill, op. cit., p. 409.

whom may soar into the bright ring, are described with a pleasant conventionality;¹ the Lover, doting on the wrong Treasure, the Politician, the Miser, the Epicure who 'plac'd heav'n in sense', all those who flout the truth by prizes the ungodly above the godly; and the few who, by contemplation of the superior orders of existence, transport their souls to a knowledge of the true God, as by

. . . the scale of nature set
From center to circumference, whereon
In contemplation of created things
By steps we may ascend to God.

This poem is, indeed, an admirable example of that species of poetic architecture which is notoriously more common in Herbert than in Vaughan. Vaughan is here imitating Herbert, though less obviously than in the poem analysed above. The rapid ballad-like setting of the scene is an old trick of Herbert's which Vaughan imitates in many poems—'And do they so?', 'Peace, peace, it is not so', and many others. Characteristically he establishes his pattern with imagery drawn from the mystics. Miss White is the only critic I know who has pointed out that the poem is a planned whole, and not a simple case of inspiration and collapse; but even she appears to miss the point, implying that in spite of all, the opening lines have a truly mystic splendour, while the rest is no more than pleasant.²

Vaughan attempted in his verse to emulate Boehme and his own brother, who used the same vocabulary for certain purposes which may safely be described as non-poetic. This is not to say that Vaughan had not a professional interest in the subject; he adds to his translation of Nollius a justification of Hermeticism as scientific,³ and would have shared his brother's attitude to More's sneer that the Doctrine of Signatures was 'fansiful' and 'Poetical'.⁴ 'True Philosophy', he wrote in an interpolated comment, 'is nothing else but a Physicall practise or triall, communicating daily to industrious and learned operators, most usefull and various conclusions and medicines'.⁵ It would appear that Vaughan was somewhat concerned to justify studies in the hermetic tradition in a manner which was, for good or ill, becoming fashionable; the philosophy had to be shown to be capable of dealing with what were regarded as facts, and with the realities of matter and human experience. But as a poet he was nearly always too wise to allow himself expressions whose force depended upon a technical signification outside the poem.

¹ See Miss Rosemary Freeman's account of these characterizations as emblem-figures in her *English Emblem Books* (London, 1948), p. 151.

² White, op. cit., p. 312.

³ Martin, ed. cit. ii. 550 and note.

⁴ Hutchinson, op. cit., p. 153.

⁵ Martin, ed. cit. ii. 581 and note.

Miss Holmes discusses the manner in which the vocabulary of Hermeticism is converted for the purposes of Christian allegory,¹ and Canon Hutchinson suggests that Vaughan 'passed the Hermetic ideas and terms so integrally into the common language of Christian tradition that they do not disconcert the reader. . . . The poet has assimilated the Hermetic ideas until they harmonise with general Christian thought'.² I think these views are substantially correct.

I have already pointed out that the use of Hermetic language is not confined to the religious verse. In the early poem 'To Amoret, Walking in a Starry Evening', he uses the familiar idea of sympathetic relationships existing between stars and sublunary organisms. In 'To Amoret gone from him,' he writes of 'the loose tye of influence' binding 'Creatures . . . that have no sence'.³ Similarly, in poems belonging to the pre-devotional period, but published in *Thalia Rediviva* (1678), there is fairly elaborate use of the Hermetic vocabulary pressed into amorous service.⁴ The translations of Boethius, printed early and late, also bear the marks of the special terminology. It affects the prose collection of devotions, *The Mount of Olives*; without previous knowledge of Vaughan, such a phrase as 'Ray thy selfe into my soule . . .' would pass unnoticed. The Night of Dionysius, and the *synteresis* of the mystics are similarly used in contexts which carry no suggestion of mystical theology.⁶ There is no lack of evidence that Vaughan had, early and late, the knack of using the hermetic terminology in this denatured manner. It is scarcely necessary to say that Suso and Boehme used it very differently, as did Vaughan himself in more technical contexts, for example in the *Hermetical Physick*. He believed the tradition had a contribution to make to truth, and this belief no doubt gives his poetic use of it a force which helps to differentiate it from the merely conceited; so does the extraordinarily high incidence of this special imagery in his poetry, which gives it as a whole an unmetaphysical tone by comparison with the drag-net fancies of some contemporaries. But it is nevertheless very far from mysticism.

In an age when it was becoming increasingly difficult to write in the manner of Donne, for the reason (among others) that the same wide fields of reference were no longer valid for imagery, Vaughan found and extensively worked this new territory. One of the habits which make him recognizably of his time is this way of converting to the purposes of his poetic argument material which is not germane to it. The *cause* of his poem may be devotional or amorous; the language of hermeticism, which, with constant use,

¹ Holmes, op. cit., pp. 26 ff.

² Hutchinson, op. cit., p. 155.

³ Martin, ed. cit. i. 8.

⁴ 'To Etesia (for Timander), the first Sight'; 'To Etesia looking from her Casement at the full Moon' (*ibid.* ii. 623, 625).

⁵ *Ibid.* i. 144.

⁶ *Ibid.* i. 169; i. 315 ('The World Contemned').

acquires a range of tone personal to the poet, is indiscriminately employed. The object of the poet is hardly ever to make the hermetic or Dionysian idea the central one; it is always illustrative, lighting and enriching the tenuous, often Herbert-inspired, argument of the poem. Sometimes this is obvious enough from the mélange of imagery and faintly specialized language from hermetic and other sources which are found together in the same poem; a good example of this is 'The Lampe',¹ which is an emblematic poem of the Herbert type, with just this personal colouring from the vocabulary which Vaughan in this curious and very literary fashion made his own.

There are occasions when, by its prevalence, this special vocabulary causes obscurity. 'Cockcrowing'² is an example of this, though its lyric argument is simple enough. The cock, by virtue of its eager annunciation of daylight, becomes an emblem of that spark in the soul which has an affinity with the light of the deity. The moralization is conventional. If the cock can watch for the light, how should not man, made in God's image, and bearing within him the remnant at least of natural law and goodness—synthesis, or as applied to particular cases, conscience³—pray in the dark? The formerly easy commerce between the soul, with its 'seed' of light, and the source of light—easy in the absence of sin—has been forfeited; but grace can tear the veil⁴ which obscures the light. This is a crude paraphrase, but it reveals the logic of the poem. The hermetic element which obscures it is at times very close to traditional theology, and at times to the interests of more orthodox science. The reference to magnetism, for example, which is repeated in the following poem, 'The Starre', proceeds naturally enough from the hermetic interest in 'ties' and 'influences'. ('The idea of an unbroken mystical communion existing, according to the Hermetics, between nature—an *unfallen* nature, presumably, such as M. Saurat argues to have passed from Cabballistic sources into Renaissance currency—gives rise to

¹ Martin, ed. cit. ii. 410.

² Thus Vaughan's

³ Ibid. 488.

Besides I've lost
A traine of lights, which in those Sun-shine dayes
Were my sure guides, and only with me stayes
(Unto my cost)
One sullen beame, whose charge is to dispense
More punishment, than knowledge to my sense.

('Mans Fall, and Recovery', ibid. 411.)

An extremely illuminating commentary on this idea may be found in Prof. W. C. Curry's analysis of *Macbeth* in his *Philosophical Patterns in Shakespeare* (Baton Rouge, 1937).

⁴ For other developments of this favourite idea see 'Faith', 'Day of Judgment', and 'l'Envoy' (Martin, ed. cit. ii. 450, 530, 541). For clouds used in the same sense see, for example, 'Agreement', 'Lovesick', 'I walked the other day . . .', and two poems not in *Siles Scintillans*, 'To Amoret, of the Difference 'twixt him, and other Lovers, and what true Love is', and 'To his Learned Friend and Loyal Fellow-Prisoner, Thomas Powel of Castell Doctor of Divinity' (ibid. ii. 528, 593, 478, i. 12, and ii. 603).

a 'mystical' (in the sense of sacramental) significance in the relationship of star to herb, star to stone, and 'the tye of bodies' generally. Magnetism is, then, simply a physical index of these sympathies, which are constantly mentioned by Vaughan, e.g. in 'Rules and Lessons',¹ 'The Constellation',² 'Christ's Nativity',³ and in the untitled poems 'And do they so?'⁴ and 'I walked the other day . . .'.⁵ A similar use is made of the idea in the early poem 'In Amicum Faeneratorem'.⁶ But it could have been made by a poet with no special interest in hermetic literature, as a useful devotional image; indeed Quarles twice uses magnetic imagery in his *Emblemes*, where many of Vaughan's most characteristic ideas are foreshadowed.⁷ Nor would the invocations 'Father of lights!' and 'O thou immortal light and heat!' seem

¹ Ibid. 436.

² Ibid. 469.

³ Ibid. 442.

⁴ Ibid. 432.

⁵ Ibid. 478.

⁶ Ibid. i. 43. Vaughan's interest in magnetism is discussed by E. Blunden, *On the Poems of Henry Vaughan* (London, 1927), and by W. O. Clough, loc. cit., p. 1119.

⁷ *Emblems, Divine and Moral*, v. 4, i. 13. Benlowes also uses the image, as D. Bush points out in *English Literature in the Earlier Seventeenth Century* (Oxford, 1945), p. 90. Other emblems of Quarles which should interest students of Vaughan are (1) i. 2. Here Adam is said to have depraved nature, and the shame of his nakedness corresponds with the eclipse of a natural light and glory which, before his fall, that nakedness symbolized. (2) i. 4. A possible source for the emblematic scales of 'Regeneration'. (3) i. 5. A Vaughan-like use of the Golden Age:

Gone are those golden days wherein
Pale conscience started not at ugly sin.

(4) i. 8. The emblem here represents eternity as a circle. (5) i. 14. This is a night-piece remarkably like some of Vaughan's; see particularly the second stanza and the citation of Alanus, 'God is a light that is never darkened; an unwearied life that cannot die; a fountain always flowing; a garden of life; a seminary of wisdom; a radical beginning of all goodness'. (6) iii. 1. This emblem takes as its text Isaiah xxvi. 9: 'My soul hath desired thee in the night'. It contains many lines reminiscent of Vaughan, including these:

My weary soul, that long has been
An inmate in this tenement of sin,
Lock'd up by cloud-brow'd error. . . .

(7) iv. 2. God represented as 'the flowing spring of light' emitting 'refulgent rays'. (8) iv. 8. Like most of the emblems of the Fourth Book, this is based on the erotic imagery of the *Song of Songs*, and it includes these words:

Thy gloomy clouds of my own guilt benight me;
Thy glorious beams, not dainty sweets, invite me.

(9) iv. 14. These lines could easily be taken for Vaughan's:

Permit thine eyes to climb this fruitful tree,
As quick Zacchaeus did, and thou shalt see
A cloud of dying flesh betwixt those beams and thee.

(10) iv. 6. The sixth stanza uses imagery of light and 'sparkles' in Vaughan's manner.

(11) v. 12. Note the Epigram:

How art thou shaded in this veil of night
Behind thy curtain flesh?

and the use of the unusual word 'tin'd' in the first line. Compare its use in 'Cockcrowing'. Further examples of this similarity should be sought in Quarles's *Hieroglyphics of the Life of Man*. The value of this comparison is that it tends to reduce the gap between Vaughan's language and that of more popular poets who lack his apparent esotericism. For Quarles's references to orthodox mystic techniques see E. N. S. Thompson, 'Mysticism in Seventeenth-Century English Literature', *S.P.*, xviii (1921), 219.

far out of the way if found in isolation in some other poet, though it might be remarked that this is language borrowed from mystical writing; there are parallels, for example, in Richard Rolle. But it is known that there are also parallels in Thomas Vaughan, who can justly be described as an exponent not of *mystik* so much as of *mysticismus*.¹

The concept of synteresis is common in Vaughan. It occurs in 'The Check',² 'The Favour',³ 'Resurrection and Immortality'⁴ (a poem which may have its roots in the *Hermetica*)⁵ in 'The World Contemned',⁶ 'The Mount of Olives',⁷ 'Mans Fall and Recovery',⁸ where it is clearly an aspect of natural and not mystical theology, as it is here also, in spite of the misleading context, and in 'The Sap',⁹ where, in a Herbertian crypto-emblematic setting, it is related to the Redemption. It provides a good example of the difficulty in Vaughan of drawing the line between specialized language used in a manner akin to that for which it was evolved and the same language, with the personal colouring it acquires from constant use in varying contexts by the same poet, or with the generally acceptable non-mystical meanings the vocabulary has acquired in *general* use. How imperceptibly the characteristic language sometimes merges into the general devotional theme may be seen in 'The Incarnation and Passion'.¹⁰

To put on Clouds instead of light,
And cloath the morning-starre with dust,
Was a translation of such height
As, but in thee, was ne'r exprest. . . .

The first line here could be taken as an alternative mode of expressing the idea of the second, the perennial conceit of the

maker pent up in a grave,
Life lockt in death, heav'n in a shell;

but we know that there is in that line, since Vaughan wrote it, a second significance; an implication that the Incarnation meant that God forfeited his own light and assumed the human veil, which is pierced only by 'gleams and fractions'. There is a slight, but substantial, ambiguity. That Vaughan was conscious of it is suggested by his ability, in what are perhaps very early poems, but nevertheless the product of a normal maturity, to exercise his image-making talent in a perfectly conventional way. 'The Eagle',¹¹ for example, uses much Donne-like imagery in a rather impersonal way:

Sometimes he frights the starrie *Swan*, and now
Orion's fearful *Hare* and then the Crow.

¹ See Judson, loc. cit., p. 598. The idea is restated in 'Dawning' (Martin, ed. cit. ii. 451) and 'I Walked the other day . . .' (ibid. 478).

² Ibid. 443. ³ Ibid. 492. ⁴ Ibid. 400.

⁵ L. C. Martin, 'Henry Vaughan and "Hermes Trismegistus"', p. 304.

⁶ Martin, ed. cit. i. 315, ii. 24 ff.

⁷ Ibid. i. 169. ⁸ Ibid. ii. 411. ⁹ Ibid. 475. ¹⁰ Ibid. 415. ¹¹ Ibid. 606.

Then with the *Orbe* it self he moves, to see
 Which is more swift, th' *Intelligence* or *He*.

Yet even here, it is fair to add, the celestial heaven has, unobtrusively, 'pure and peaceful air'—a foretaste of 'The World'. Another example of this kind of poetry is 'In Zodiacum Marcelli Palingenii',¹ and 'The Importunate Fortune',² in spite of its almost certain connexion with the Hermetica,³ has a quite conventional empyrean-flight and plays with the idea of the *fortunatus*, which really belongs to earlier poetry. Vaughan is from the beginning a poet with his roots in poetry rather than in religious experience; his interest in theological and philosophical thought is governed by the limitations imposed upon such thought by its poetic conventionalization, and it follows both that the germs of his poems are to be found within that pale, and that his own use of what we may call extra-poetic speculation will generally be to conventionalize it in the same way before he employs it.

'Cockcrowing' and certain other poems do seem to contain elements of speculative thought which have not undergone this process. Some of them become less obtrusive with the realization that the cock is after all emblematic, and that his divine powers are not, in terms of the poem, ends in themselves. But there remains in suspension an unresolved extra-poetic element. (I believe that this no longer exists if the work of the poet is studied as a whole; an unresolved idea may acquire a positive poetic value on repetition in intelligibly related contexts, as Mr. T. S. Eliot's poetry shows.) Vaughan has been careful in some ways; he rarely, for example, allows the hermetic language to carry any alchemical overtone; but in this poem his *seed* is something the reader might strain at if he has not already swallowed the heretical camel of related poems, or seen the private value accorded the expression by its use in 'Disorder and Frailty'⁴—a poem which is in many respects a useful 'key' to what I have called the private continuum of Vaughan's mind.

Let not perverse
 And foolish thoughts addle to my Bil
 Of forward sins, and Kil
 That seed, which thou
 In me didst sow,
 But dress, and water with thy grace
 Together with the seed, the place;
 And for his sake
 Who died to stake
 His life for mine, tune to thy will
 My heart, my verse.

¹ Ibid. 611.

² Ibid. 614.

³ Martin, 'Henry Vaughan and "Hermes Trismegistus"', p. 302.

⁴ Martin, ed. cit. ii. 444.

Here, once more under the aegis of Herbert,¹ the expression reveals its exact relationship to the rest of Vaughan's devotional material. Whatever its significance in alchemy or hermetics, it is here a conceited summary of the residual light-veil-cloud constellation which we have seen expressed so many times before. It is equally clear in 'Repentance':²

Lord, since thou didst in this vile Clay
 That sacred Ray
 Thy spirit *plant*, quickning the whole
 With that one grains Infused wealth,
 My forward flesh creeped on, and subtly stole
 Both growth and power; checking the health
 And heat of thine. . . .

But the constellation has more stars than this. In examining this single expression we stumble upon one of the most unusual and least understood features of Vaughan's poetry, the particular values he gives to the concept of sin by the idiosyncrasy of his literary habit. In his treatment of the Fall Vaughan is very close to his brother. 'I look on this life as the Progress of an Essence Royall: The Soul but quits her *court* to see the *country*', writes Thomas. Release from the veil-body meant the restoration of life and light. 'Ignorance gave this *release* the name of Death, but properly it is the *Soules Birth*'.³ In Henry Vaughan these ideas certainly have an unorthodox tone, though they have implications which will not be quite unfamiliar to the student of Spenser; whatever their origin (Mr. Wardle and Professor Martin have suggested that it may be hermetic) they strongly colour his poetry whenever childhood, sin, prayer, and death are its theme. Miss Holmes writes very interestingly on various occult interpretations of the Fall which were current in Vaughan's time, and with which he is likely to have been familiar.⁴ But at best he took only a hint from somewhere; the idea becomes precisely his own, and it is used to give a new and personal force to meditations which have their origin in much more commonplace reflections.

The poetry of the period contains a curious genre of which the distinctive characteristic is the exploitation in garden-poetry of a pastoral-allegorical vein. Marvell offers the most conspicuous examples of the genre in his Mower poems, 'To Little T. C.', 'The Nymph Complaining', and in 'The Garden' itself. The lesser poets with whom Marvell is associated also dabble in the convention, and the allegorical node is clearly exposed in

¹ See 'Prayer'.

² Martin, ed. cit. ii. 448. Italics mine.

³ Wardle, loc. cit., p. 946.

⁴ Holmes, op. cit., pp. 53 ff. Clough (loc. cit.) contests the view that Vaughan would not be familiar with the Plotian 'pre-existence'.

Beaumont's 'The Garden',¹ and in Shirley's poem of the same title.² A second biblical garden is associated with the theme—the garden of the *Song of Solomon*, the relevant lines of which are quoted by Vaughan at the end of 'Regeneration',³ in which poem he employs the imagery of the *Canticles* in a manner resembling that of St. John of the Cross.⁴ The garden was, therefore, a poetic symbol of a more or less general significance, which was a good deal more complicated in its suggestiveness than might be supposed. It stands for unfallen and asexual life (this may have added to Milton's difficulties in his treatment of prelapsarian sexuality) and it is also associated with the idea of a blessed locality in which the breath of inspiration may be felt; an idea derived from a love-poem which was constantly interpreted as relating allegorically to the mystical life. It is from an Eden conceived as a garden in which man, like the rest of the creation, is in constant mystical intercourse with God, that Vaughan's simple soul sets out. Eden is used in this sense in the poem 'Corruption'.⁵ In that poem the unfallen and fallen states are contrasted. In his early days, like Adam, man

saw Heaven o'er his head, and knew from whence
He came (condemned) hither.

As he moved away from Paradise, he retained, for a time, his pristine powers. But he quarrelled with nature (compare Marvell, 'The Mower on Gardens') which he had ruined by his fall. Nevertheless, there were still occasions when his surroundings could seem paradisal. Now, it appears, even his sighs for the lost Eden are a thing of the past; the soul (says Vaughan with a return to this dominant image) is veiled in a thick cloud, to be pierced only by the grace of God.

'The Retreat'⁶ is a poem on almost the same subject. Its connexion with the earlier translation from Boethius, *Felix prior aetas qua paucis homines contenti*, indicates, in a manner reinforced by its similarities with 'Corruption', that the 'I' represents the speaker as the type of Man, and one infers that in his personal fall from grace he is merely repeating in little the general history of mankind. There was, historically speaking, a 'white age' in which mankind was in the position of the child who has not yet begun to obscure the element of natural law implanted in him at birth by God—the seed. (It was not necessarily Pelagian to hold such a doctrine.) At a short distance from this personal Eden, man can still 'spy some shadows of eternity' in

¹ *The Minor Poems of Joseph Beaumont*, ed. E. Robinson (London, 1914), p. 450.

² *The Oxford Book of Seventeenth Century Verse*, ed. Grierson and Bullough (Oxford, 1934), p. 410.

³ Martin, ed. cit. ii. 397.

⁴ Similarities between these poets have been pointed out by Mr. Robert Sencourt in his *Carmelite and Poet* (London, 1943) but he does not attempt to explore them. There are fascinating possibilities in such an exploration.

⁵ Martin, ed. cit. ii. 440.

⁶ *Ibid.* 419.

a flower, because he has not begun the process of attempting, through sin, entirely to ruin this original gift of God, and to obscure the natural *light*. Before the veil is drawn by sin he continues to feel

Through all this fleshly dress
Bright *shootes* of everlastingnesse.

The desire of the penitent soul is to return to this Eden of perfect luxuriance —the fantastic gardens of Marvell and Milton become, in Vaughan's poem, 'That shady City of Palme trees'. But this is impossible; all that the poet can wish for is to achieve at death a condition of primitive simplicity, unveiled and paradisal. The parallel to 'Corruption' which Professor Martin quotes from Thomas Vaughan in the note in his edition is a parallel also to 'The Retreat'. 'He was excluded from a glorious *Paradyse*, and confin'd to a *base world*, whose sickly *infected Elements* conspiring with his own *Nature*, did assist and hasten that *Death*, which already began to reign in his *Body*. . . .'¹ All poetry conventionalizes the philosophic material; there may be occult elements in these poems, but they are all reduced to poetry.

In 'Mans Fall and Recovery'² there is ample confirmation of the use of 'I' to signify 'Man' in general. Here the theme is much the same as that of the other two poems; the 'Everlasting hills' are Eden, which Man has left to live under Clouds, where his divine element (here represented by a flower) droops and sleeps. He is now a slave to passion, and has lost the true light (with a suggestion that the fixed stars are its symbol) retaining only the ineradicable conscience. After two thousand years came the old Law, which by its dominantly prohibitive nature exacerbated rather than controlled his state of sin; until the Incarnation gave him in its place a law of love by faith in which he can be justified. The poem ends with an elaborate and somewhat frigid conceit of a kind not often found in Vaughan but it is nevertheless a good example of the nature of the convention I am seeking to illustrate.

With the untitled poem which begins 'They are all gone into the world of light!' it is possible to see what happens to this poetic habit of mind when it is applied to the idea of death. The illuminating memory of the dead suggests starlight in darkness; since these memories are within the poet's breast, they seem to be a substitute for the light which once inhabited it, but which has been clouded; the effect again relates them to stars, which are elsewhere used as symbols of the divine light. The dead are then spoken of as if they were stars; the luminaries of the incorruptible heaven which 'trample on' the corrupted world in which he lives under his veil. He expresses gratitude for this indication of the issue of death, suggesting that

¹ See note on the above poem, in Martin's edition.

² Martin, ed. cit. ii. 411.

this indication of the destiny of the dead is equivalent to an angelic visitation in a dream, giving unnatural signs of a glorious hereafter. The element of divinity in man has been confined to a tomb; when God himself releases that element it will once more be seen for what it is. With this idea, Vaughan resumes the star image.

If a star were confin'd into a Tomb
 Her captive flames must need burn there;
 But when the hand that lockt her up, gives room,
 She'll shine through all the sphaere.

This enables him not only to make his usual equivalence between the synteresis and light, but also to continue the idea of the dead as stars. He ends the poem with a stanza which lapses into more commonplace language, asking God to take up his spirit from a 'world of thrall' into the heavenly world of liberty; followed by a stanza which characteristically reverts to his favourite cloud-complex, asking that the mists which obscure his 'perspective' should be dispelled, or that he should be removed to the paradisal hill where these mists do not exist. The final version in this poem of the star image is closely paralleled in the 'Ascension-Hymn',¹ a poem which reiterates the theme of 'Corruption'. The soul must put off corruptibility; it is, however—to paraphrase 'Regeneration'—possible, by grace and merit, to 'die' in this way before one's death.

And yet some
 That know to die
 Before death come,
 Walk to the skie²
 Even in this life; but all such can
 Leave behinde them the old Man.

This suggests the whole complex of ideas concerning the union of the veiled and the true light which is represented by the stars; and introduces the idea of the soul as a star clad in mortality.

If a star
 Should leave the Sphaere,
 She must first mar
 Her flaming wear,
 And after fall, for in her dress
 Of glory, she cannot transgress.

From this point there is a natural progression to the Eden-idea; in his *prior aetas* man could shine 'naked, innocent and bright'; he soiled this brightness, and so remained until the Redemption, which gave him the power to 'ascend', presumably to the stars. The whole Eden-corruption-

¹ Ibid. 482.

² Compare 'The World'.

death-star idea is very complex but essentially poetic; it is never worked out like a theorem, but is constantly insinuating itself into, and taking control of, commonplace devotional themes. It is almost certainly affected by advanced contemporary interpretations of the Fall as a psychological as well as an historical phenomenon; it may have pure hermetic elements; it may owe something to Cornelius Agrippa or to Nieremberg and the others discussed by Miss Holmes; but it has become Vaughan's own, and it would be less confusing to call it an image than to call it an idea.

Once the *poetic* nature of this idea-cluster has been grasped, it will be seen that it is the very basis of Vaughan's best work, the force which gives relevance to the mass of unassimilated thought which I have called the personal continuum—that which takes on new and suggestive configurations whenever the need to write is sharpened by some irritant, a phrase from Herbert, an aspect of devotion, whether liturgical or meditative. 'The Night'¹ shows how darkness is associated with this leading idea. It has its origin in the story of Nicodemus, who went to Jesus by night. In doing so he came to resemble a plant (the continuity of the plant's intercourse with the light being unbroken). This resemblance is somewhat obscurely stated in the third stanza, but clearly in the fourth. The poem then becomes a eulogy of night, wherein the willing soul can, like the plants and unlike the Jews, commune with the symbolic starlight; it is 'the day of Spirits'. This theme is developed with a number of Herbertian analogues.

Gods silent, searching flight:
When my Lords head is fill'd with dew, and all
His locks are wet with the clear drops of night;
 His still, soft call;
His knocking time; The souls dumb watch,
 When Spirits their fair kinred catch.

The second and third lines here provide an extraordinary example of the way in which Vaughan could fuse into his dominant image material from another source. This quotation from the *Canticles*, which superficially aligns him with certain mystical writers, is assimilated to the characteristic starlight symbol; 'the clear drops of night' are stars. The significance of the lines depends primarily upon Vaughan's own idea-cluster, though they are enriched by the mystical connotations of the passage in its original context. The conceit is very daring; the sky is God's hair, and the stars are the drops of night dew sprinkled upon it.

Vaughan continues with a lament that his life cannot resemble this peaceful beauty, for the light of the sun returns, by which contemplation is impossible. He ends with an explicit reference to the Dionysian darkness, carefully establishing the distance between this quasi-technical notion and

¹ Martin, ed. cit. ii. 522.

his own image by the qualifying clause, '(some say)'. 'The Night' is not a poem about the Dionysian darkness, but a meditation or night-thought of which the logical prose content is to be found in *The Mount of Olives*, where Vaughan cites an Italian proverb which says that night is the mother of thoughts, continuing:

And I shall add, that those thoughts are *Stars*, the *Scintillations* and *lightnings* of the soul struggling with darkness. This *Antipathy* in her is *radical*, for being descended from the *house of light*, she hates a contrary *principle*, and being at that time a prisoner in some measure to an enemy, she becomes pensive, and full of thoughts. Two great extremes there are, which she equally abhors, *Darkness* and *Death*. . . . The Contemplation of *death* is an obscure, melancholy *walk* an *Expiation in shadows & solitude*, but it leads unto *life*, & he that sets out at *midnight*, will sooner meet the *Sunne*, than he that sleeps it out betwixt his curtains. . . .¹

But the full meaning of the poem does not yield itself to the reader who is unable to supply the context of this night-idea; a context in which it is associated with the theme of paradisal origins, corruption, and the interrupted communion, and the symbolic starlight. Like 'The Lampe' and 'Regeneration', this poem could be described as a blend of Herbertian, Biblical, and hermetic ideas; but it is far truer to say that although the original impulse may have been Biblical, the imagery of the poem belongs to a highly personal synthesis of Vaughan's own making.

Vaughan's use of the night as a devotional symbol is therefore by no means commonplace. Without doubt it is affected by these words of Dionysius:

... by . . . unceasing and absolute renunciation of thyself and all things, thou shalt in pureness cast all things aside, and be released from all, and so shalt be led upwards to the Ray of that Divine Darkness which exceedeth all existence.²

But, as the idea occurs in Vaughan it simply cannot be equated with any extra-poetic statement; it exists in terms of the image-convention which he himself has devised, and grows naturally out of its *données*. The same may be said for his use of the idea of the dead as stars. This is very explicit in the untitled poem beginning 'Joy of my Life!',³ where he addresses some dead friend and exclaims upon the way in which the friend's influence continues to guide him.

Stars are of mighty use: The night
Is dark, and long;
The Rode foul, and where one goes right,
Six may go wrong.
One twinkling ray
Shot o'r some cloud,

¹ Ibid. i. 169.

² Underhill, op. cit., p. 347.

³ Martin, ed. cit. ii. 422.

May clear much way
And guide a croud.

They are (indeed,) our Pillar-fires
Seen as we go,
They are that Cities shining spires
We travel too;
A swordlike gleame
Kept man for sin
First *Out*; This beame
Will guide him *In*.

Even in this comparatively simple example Vaughan suggests the whole private context with the conceit of a sword-guarded Eden in this last stanza. The logic is superficially obvious; the star-ray, which is guiding man towards salvation, suggests the flash of the archangelic swords at the gates of Eden. But in the alogical context of the poetic image, the interest resides in the fact that the end-product of the process I have been describing inevitably suggests its origins; the idea of the dead as stars, in the course of its expounding, draws into its context the idea of the lost psychological paradise. Although Vaughan was probably familiar with the Greek star-heroes it is unnecessary to pursue the question of his indebtedness to such classical notions. The whole poetic organism has acquired autonomy, and is to be understood in its own terms.

It may be too much to suggest that only when Vaughan is in some way (almost always by a literary stimulus) induced to allow this poetic organism to be modified by some external force which alters its environment does he produce a poem wholly characteristic and convincing, though sometimes tenuous in argument—a consequence of the material and method. There are times when the notion of the sympathetic communion of nature with heaven becomes indistinguishable from a simpler microcosmism, or from more commonplace exercises on the theme of 'the book of nature' such as may be found in many contemporary poets, including Donne, Beaumont, and Habington. There are poems like 'Religion',¹ which, though it looks back along the road from Paradise, treats its subject in terms of a metaphor drawn from the popular cosmology of the time, enriched with a reference to the miracle at Cana, and based on a line from the *Canticles*. This complexity is characteristic enough, but it has no evident relationship to the process I am postulating. Vaughan, as we have seen, also makes effective use of the concept of world-harmony, though this is only distantly related to his dominant images. To claim that this pattern can be discerned in all his poetry which is worth reading would be to force the issue; it is enough

¹ Martin, ed. cit. ii. 404.

to say that it *is* dominant, and that a recognition of this fact is essential to a true understanding of the poet.

Part of the intention of this paper was to vindicate Vaughan as a poet pure and simple. He is in no sense at all a mystic; he makes a poet's use of the mystic's language. He has almost entirely converted it to his own purposes, and he has profoundly altered the value of its various terms by organizing them into a pattern which has its effect upon their individual significations.

There is, among students of Vaughan, some doubt as to the nature and date of Vaughan's conversion. The evidence for it is indeed very slight, and there is, on the evidence of his poetry, no case for it sufficiently substantial to warrant further search. What cannot be too strongly stated is the absolute uselessness of attempts to discuss the poetry as if its value were determined by his religious life, and of seeking in the poetry evidence, to be interpreted in philosophical or theological terms, of a religious experience or a series of such experiences. Vaughan was a poet of predominantly literary inspiration, who, for a few years, achieved a remarkable mental condition in which much thought, reading, and conversation coalesced to form a unique corpus of homogeneous poetic material, available whenever some external stimulus called it into creative action for the development of any suitable theme in poetry. Therein lies the singularity of *Silex Scintillans*; the elements of the great image-pattern were already present in earlier years, but they were disjunct and powerless. Something happened, something to do with poetry, and not with prayer; a trumpet sounded and the bones lived. The return to disjunction, the moment that ended this imaginative cohesion, was, more directly than any event in the external world, the signal for Vaughan's poetic death; and it can no more be explained than the force which brought him to birth as a poet, or the grim truth that many other creative artists have, like Vaughan, survived by a generation their potent, delicate gift.

HALF-RHYME IN WILFRED OWEN: ITS DERIVATION AND USE

By D. S. R. WELLAND

REVIEWING Siegfried Sassoon's 1920 edition of the poems of Wilfred Owen in the *Athenaeum* (10 December 1920) Edmund Blunden foresaw that 'the discovery of final assonances in place of rhyme may mark a new age in poetry'. Certainly modern lyric poetry has made such extensive use of this device (known variously as half-rhyme, pararhyme, or vowel dissonance) that it has become a characteristic of the age. The principle of it is now well known: instead of changing the initial consonant while retaining the vowel sound as rhyme does (bold/cold), the consonantal framework is retained and the vowel changed (cold/calld/killed/curled). This is half-rhyme in its strictest form and as Owen regularly uses it. In his hands it is a good alternative to the obviousness of rhyme against which Pope had protested two centuries earlier:

Where'er you find 'the cooling western breeze',
In the next line, it 'whispers through the trees':
If crystal streams 'with pleasing murmur creep'
The reader's threatened (not in vain) with 'sleep'.

(*Essay on Criticism*, ll. 350-3)

and which blunts the effect of so much of Swinburne's work by the frequency with which such pairs as lust/dust, rods/gods, and tears/years recur. Every writer on Owen has praised this value of half-rhyme, but none has inquired into its antecedents or its source.

There is a danger that the enthusiast may too readily in his reading of other poets identify as half-rhyme something quite fortuitous and unintentional. Thus a change in pronunciation may make what was for the author a perfect rhyme sound by modern standards like dissonance, as when Pope rhymes 'obey' and 'tea' or Dryden regularly pairs 'design' and 'join'. Again, an apparent half-rhyme may have been intended merely as an eye-rhyme or as the best approximation to rhyme permitted by the sense, as in such pairs as over/lover, human/woman, and driven/heaven (all of which occur in Rossetti's 'Eden Bower'). Deliberate use of half-rhyme, however, is to be found in three poets before Owen, two English and one American: Henry Vaughan, Gerard Manley Hopkins, and Emily Dickinson.

The late Dr. F. E. Hutchinson drew attention to those in Vaughan a few years ago.¹ Some of these (stir/far, flesh/crush) are less strict than Owen's, but others are just as exact: priest/oppress'd, sport/art, and sense/sins. His poems contain many instances of eye-rhymes such as love/move which by our pronunciation are dissonantal, but variations between Vaughan's speech and ours would need to be very accurately determined before there could be any final verdict on his half-rhyme, despite such pairs as abroad/shade. Vaughan's use of half-rhyme is sporadic and alternative to rhyme in a poem, never systematic: the casual reader might overlook it much more easily than in Owen's work.

The same is true of Emily Dickinson. George Frisbie Whicher, her most recent biographer, refers to her use of what he terms 'suspended rhyme',² which is the inexact form of half-rhyme that does not insist on the correspondence of the initial consonants. He is disinclined to see any special significance in her irregularities. 'All poets resort to suspended rhyme on occasion, and certain modern poets have made a cult of its experimental use' he comments, possibly with Owen in mind. He finds 'attractive' the suggestion that she 'intended the conscious disjunction of her rhymes to express her perception of a world where seams would not fit and sequences ravelled out of reach' but is unable to accept it.

If she had felt any such significance in her off-rhymes as the theory implies, we should expect to find her using them chiefly to voice her moods of doubt and dismay and returning to full rhyme in her positive and ecstatic moments. But no such correlation between rhyme and mood is observable. . . . We are forced to conclude, therefore, that Emily Dickinson accepted inexact rhymes because their hinted tinkling served to round her stanzas as well as fully chiming syllables. There is no evidence of any such subtlety of intention on her part as the modern critic would like to discover.

With Owen, of course, there is such a correlation; this would account for his much more deliberate and meticulous half-rhyme (sun/sown) as distinct from Emily Dickinson's more exuberant and looser approximations (come/time, star/door). At times she is more exact; peer/pare and new/now occur, and on one occasion she anticipates Owen with birds/bards; sometimes she uses these 'off-rhymes' consistently throughout a poem as in 'When night is almost done' and 'Twas a long parting' (poems of two and four quatrains respectively), but her use of them is generally so casual and apparently incidental as to support Mr. Whicher's view that it arises more from impatience to express herself than from the calculated experimenting with a carefully devised medium indicated in Owen's work.

¹ Henry Vaughan (Oxford, 1947), pp. 160 et seq.

² This was a Poet (New York, 1939), pp. 243-9. Grateful acknowledgements are due to Chas. Scribner's Sons for permission to reproduce these passages.

Hopkins differs from Vaughan and Emily Dickinson in that he only uses vowel dissonance internally within the line as an additional adornment and never as an alternative to end-rhyme. Thus 'heel' is echoed by 'hurl' in 'The Windhover': 'As a skate's heel sweeps smooth on a bow-bend; the hurl and gliding. . . .' The pattern emerges more clearly in 'God's Grandeur':

Generations have trod, have trod, have trod
And all is seared with trade.

and there is another hint of it in 'Spring': 'What is all this juice and all this joy?' Had he realized its full possibilities his poetry might have been spared some of those graceless contortions to which it is occasionally subjected in a desperate search for rhyme (as in the second stanza of 'The Bugler's First Communion'), although the sense of effort that this imparts to the poem is often in keeping with its theme and Hopkins's religious ecstasy finds more appropriate expression in the fullness of rhyme than in the diffidence of half-rhyme.

Owen's familiarity with the work of any of these three poets cannot be established with certainty; they are not represented in his small library which his family has preserved intact, but that proves nothing. Emily Dickinson seems the least likely influence, since Mr. Whicher's bibliography implies that the first English edition of her poems was Conrad Aiken's selection which did not appear until 1924; there is nothing to suggest that Owen knew the American editions of 1890, 1891, 1896, and 1914. Although the complete works of Hopkins were not published until 1918 some of his poems had been published in four anthologies earlier, but even had Owen seen them they are hardly likely to have been of direct inspiration to him, since in all the pieces so printed¹ there are only five instances of half-rhyme. *Robert Bridges and Contemporary Poets* (1893) contained 'Spring' and 'Spring and Fall' with the two internal half-rhymes in the line 'What heart heard of, ghost guessed'. 'Heaven-haven' (the title is, in effect, half-rhyme), 'God's Grandeur' and 'Barnfloor and Winepress' (where three rhyming lines end with the eye-rhymes food/blood/wood) were all included in *Lyra Sacra* (1895). Owen may have known these anthologies or been familiar with Vaughan, but there is no evidence of it.

To assume an inevitably literary source of half-rhyme may, of course, be specious. Any English hymnal has such lines as:

New perils past, new sins forgiven,
New thoughts of God, new hopes of Heaven.

It occurs in proverbial expressions: 'Every bullet has its billet' or 'Many

¹ See W. H. Gardner, *Gerard Manley Hopkins 1844-1889. A study of poetic idiosyncrasy in relation to poetic tradition* (London, 1944), i. 290-4.

a mickle makes a muckle'. It is even with us in the nursery in such a phrase as 'the man in the moon' or in the rhyme of Dr. Foster who 'stepped in a puddle right up to his middle'. Indeed, it is a device found with surprising frequency in English in such hyphenated formations as 'ship-shape' and 'tip-top' with their more colloquial fellows 'riff-raff', 'dilly-dally', 'flip-flap', 'clip-clop', 'tittle-tattle', and a host of others. To an alert, imaginative mind interested in poetic technique any of these might have been sufficient to beget half-rhyme, but Owen's immaturity and lack of self-confidence would, I feel, have needed an impetus more positive than hints as casual as these.

A more tempting suggestion is that Owen derived it from the same source as Vaughan and Hopkins, the Welsh. Vaughan, of course, was Welsh by birth, and the Welsh influence on the poetry of Hopkins has been explored in an article to which I am considerably indebted.¹ Two extracts from his letters are relevant, the first referring to two sonnets which Professor Abbott conjectures to be 'God's Grandeur' and 'The Starlight Night': 'The chiming of consonants I got in part from the Welsh which is very rich in sound and imagery.' The second explains that 'The Wreck of the Deutschland' contains 'certain chimes suggested by the Welsh poetry I had been reading (what they call *cynghanedd*)'. Miss Lilly also adduces evidence of the original composition by Hopkins of *cynghanedd* in Welsh. Sir Harold Idris Bell² refers to *cynghanedd* as a 'combination of internal rhyme and alliteration or consonantal equivalence' existing in Welsh poetry in many varieties since the fourteenth century. He illustrates by an English example which demonstrates clearly its relation to half-rhyme: 'Night may dare not my dearest.' However, there is again no evidence of the use of this as an alternative to end-rhyme.

In his notebooks³ Hopkins refers to G. P. Marsh's lectures of 1860 in which he mentions the use of half-rhyme internally in early Scandinavian literature and as end-rhyme later:

In Icelandic verse an opposite kind of alliteration (*shothending*) is made use of, namely ending with the same consonant but after a different vowel, as 'bad', 'led', 'find', 'band', 'sin', 'run' (from Marsh, who calls it half-rhyme).

In addition to these *shothendings* Marsh also quotes examples of exact half-rhyme such as land/lend and fire/fear.⁴ I should be very reluctant without further evidence to suggest that Owen was familiar with Icelandic *shoth-*

¹ Gweneth Lilly, 'The Welsh Influence in the Poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins' *M.L.R.* xxxviii (1943), 192-205.

² *The Development of Welsh Poetry* (Oxford, 1936), pp. 35-6.

³ H. House, *The Notebooks and Papers of Gerard Manley Hopkins* (Oxford, 1937), p. 243.

⁴ *The Origin and History of the English Language and of the Early Literature it embodies* (London, 1862), p. 285.

ending either directly or indirectly through Marsh, but this reference is of interest as being one of the earliest recorded uses of the term 'half-rhyme'. (*O.E.D.* does not give 'half-rhyme' at all.)

In the introduction to his *Collected Poems* (1938) Robert Graves refers to his own experiments in about 1909 in adapting to English various technical devices of Welsh poetry including forms of dissonance very close to half-rhyme. He tells me, however, that his first published use of it was not until several years later and that he does not recall Owen discussing the subject with him during their acquaintance. I instance his use of it merely as a possible parallel to Owen's: what one poet has found, another may also find from the same source. In his introduction Mr. Graves refers also to internal assonance and the rhyming of stressed with unstressed syllables as Welsh characteristics. Dr. Hutchinson comments on the presence of these and of alliteration in Vaughan's work. To alliteration and assonance Owen was much addicted, more particularly in his non-war poems such as 'The Promisers', a poem where the slightness of the theme hardly justifies the intricacies of assonance, alliteration, and internal rhyme with which the poem is so lavishly interwoven. Similarly 'The Kind Ghosts' was a very carefully wrought piece of work, the manuscript of which is liberally overscored with a system of accents, underlinings, rings, and marginal notation to stress the elaborate alliterative and assonantal pattern. The rhyming of stressed with unstressed syllables occurs only five times in all his published poems and thus can hardly be regarded as characteristic of him.

Although these facts lend colour to it, the hypothesis that Owen was familiar with and influenced by Welsh poetry remains uncorroborated. Despite their name and their connexion with the border country of Oswestry the Owens are emphatic in their denial of Welsh ancestry. When John Lehmann, in a broadcast, referred to Owen as a Welsh poet Miss Owen wrote at once to the *Listener* (27 July 1944, p. 101):

Both our parents were English, and though, no doubt, the name carries the implication of a distant Welsh origin, the connexion is too far back to affect the fact that we are an English family. Wilfred was born at Oswestry, Salop, and would, I feel, have mildly resented the suggestion that he was Welsh.

Nothing on the poet's bookshelves argues a knowledge of Welsh, there is no definite suggestion of it in his published work and among the manuscripts nothing more substantial than an isolated use of the words 'plas' and 'Cymry', words which are familiar enough to many who make no pretensions to Welsh scholarship. Moreover, an article on Owen in *Welsh Outlook*,¹ although claiming him as Welsh (this time without being corrected by his sister) does not seem to find any specifically Welsh charac-

¹ Ifan Kyrle Fletcher, 'Wilfred Owen', *Welsh Outlook*, xv (1928), pp. 332-3.

teristics in his poetry; had the Welsh influence been obvious such a periodical might be expected to have emphasized it particularly.

Mr. Blunden's belief, hinted at in his prefatory memoir to the 1931 edition and expressed several times to me in conversation, is that Owen derived half-rhyme from the French rather than the Welsh, although he could instance no specific source. There is, however, one French poet of this century who did make deliberate use of it and in whose work Owen may have met it. Jules Romains is better known as a novelist than as a poet, and even when his volumes of verse were appearing before the Great War the philosophical interest of his doctrine of Unanimism tended to eclipse his technical innovations; but his experiments with French prosody seem to me singularly close to those that Owen was to make with English. No mere iconoclast, he sought rather to modernize than to break away from the tradition of French verse, and his innovations arise from no craze for novelty. He retains uncompromisingly the basic principle of syllabism, observes strictly the rule of -e mute, and only allows inequalities in the length of lines provided that a definite pattern is maintained. Owen is similarly respectful of convention when it represents a discipline and all his work is similarly related to a basis of tradition. It is in matters of rhyme that both are pioneers. Of course it is possible to see such a dissatisfaction with rhyme merely as a sign of the times, something which the two poets came to feel independently, as did so many more. Such a thesis would be the more tenable if Owen's use of half-rhyme were confined to his war poems where it is functional and produces an effect of frustration in keeping with the tenor of the poem, but its earlier use in a poem such as 'From My Diary' by a poet with (at that time particularly) Georgian affinities is much less functional and seems to spring from a desire to experiment with a technique which the poet has evolved or, more likely, borrowed. Complete proof that it was from Romains that he borrowed it is impossible, but the similarities between the two are striking enough to bear further investigation.

Romains's theory of prosody was formulated in the 'Petit traité de versification' written in conjunction with G. Chennevière and published in Paris (*Nouvelle Revue Française*) in 1923. By then, of course, Owen had been dead five years, but the work is worth quoting as proof that the extensive use made by Romains of half-rhyme in his poetry of the previous decade is deliberate and designed to achieve ends similar to those at which Owen aimed. His third chapter is devoted to a study of what he calls *accords*, and his definition of *accord simple* shows at once its relation to half-rhyme:

L'accord simple est produit par:

- 1) *l'hétérophonie de la voyelle finale (non muette);*

- 2) *l'homophonie* des éléments sonores qui peuvent la suivre (consonne -e muet);
- 3) *l'homophonie* de la ou des consonnes d'appui.

L'une des deux dernières conditions, au choix, est obligatoire, l'autre demeurant facultative.

After quoting examples such as *bonheur/mort*, he points out that *accord* may be masculine, feminine, or mixed, dependent on whether the words that form it are masculine or feminine rhymes. (His examples are: *accord féminin: sentinelle/nulle; accord mixte: seule/sol*). He proceeds to recognize three degrees of *accord*: *accord pauvre* when there is correspondence of only one consonant (*mer/cor*), *accord suffisant* when there is correspondence of a group of at least two consonants (*cri/croc, peste/buste*), and *accord riche* when all elements of the syllable other than the vowel correspond (*ruche/reche*). Thus Owen's half-rhyme is *accord riche*.

Romains takes the principle of assonance further than Owen would have been inclined to with his *accord renversé (riche/chère)* and *accord renversé imparfait (sac/col)*. While Owen's musical ear might have led him to employ such assonance incidentally he would not, I think, have systematized it as Romans does here, but he would certainly have subscribed to the latter's view of the value of assonance and half-rhyme:

Mais le propre de l'accord est de créer dans toute une suite de vers un lien harmonique à la fois plus étroit et plus continu que celui des rimes traditionnelles. Quelles que soient l'ingéniosité du poète et la manière savante dont il enlace de telles rimes, les vers construits sur une rime *a* demeurent sans véritable lien harmonique avec ceux qui sont construits sur une rime *b* ou sur toute autre. Au contraire, dans une série de vers, le phénomène de l'accord peut se répéter d'un vers à l'autre de telle sorte que chaque vers de la série soit effectivement solidaire de tous les autres. On obtient ainsi une continuité musicale à laquelle la technique classique ne pouvait pas même songer.

Such a continuity Owen achieves in the concluding stanza of 'Insensibility' (a passage to which I shall recur) by a use of half-rhyme internally as well as finally in the line, another device sanctioned by Romans.

These theories had been put into practice in two volumes of poems particularly: *La Vie unanime* (1908)¹ and *Odes et prières* (1913).² In the second of these the following occur: *porte/partent/perdre, moi/mieux, murs/mort*, and, in one poem, *longtemps/tempes, soir/soie, tournant/maintenant*, and *pieds/épieu*. Romans rarely uses half-rhyme throughout a poem as Owen was to do, but the following are taken from *La Vie unanime*. The first is a particularly good example of the use of *accords* for harmonic continuity: lines 1 and 3 are half-rhyme, as are also 2 and 4, but there is

¹ Créteil: L'Abbaye.

² Paris: Mercure de France.

the additional relationship between lines 1 and 2 of what Romans calls *rime par diminution*, as there is also between lines 3 and 4:

Les omnibus grincent et les cheminées fument;
 Les hommes sont liés par leurs rythmes confus;
 Des groupes vifs naissent, puissent, se transforment.
 Les muscles réveillés consentent d'être forts.

(*'La Caserne'*)

Other poems show a mingling of half-rhyme with pure rhyme such as Owen was later to use to such good effect:

Je ne fais pas ce qu'il faudrait. J'ai peur. J'ai tort.
 Il faudrait que je bouge avant qu'il soit trop tard.
 Je suis à l'ancre; la marée emplit le port;
 Elle veut m'arracher; elle croit que je pars.

(*'On joue du piano, là-bas'*)

The longest continuous passage in which it is used is the conclusion of 'Le Café':

Et la foule se creuse à frôler ces grosseurs
 D'où le printemps intérieur suinte en désirs.
 Le café sait courber les rythmes qui le gênent,
 Comme un enfant qui plie un jonc sur son genou.
 Il soumet le trottoir à sa présence calme,
 Et regarde la rue, ayant plus d'âme qu'elle.
 Rêveur, le dos bombé, comme un chat devant l'âtre,
 Il veut rester vivant pour jouir et connaître.
 Il sourit, satisfait qu'il existe des rues
 Et c'est tout leur effort qui devient son sourire;
 Toutes leurs secousses, leurs arrêts, leurs détentes,
 Toutes leurs forces, flambant soudain, puis éteintes,
 Toutes leurs torsions craquantes de vertèbres,
 Tout leur devenir qui devient son équilibre.

Such passages as these may well have been responsible for suggesting to Owen's sensitive ear the haunting cadences of half-rhyme, especially as the earliest dated poem in which he tries out the new device is 'From My Diary, July 1914', a poem which, if the date of its title is the date of composition, was written in France in the year following the publication of *Odes et prières*.

During his stay in France from 1913 to 1915 Owen enjoyed an unusual intimacy with Laurent Tailhade, the veteran symbolist poet and pacifist, an intimacy which must have influenced the young Owen very strongly and which may have sown the seeds of his abhorrence of war, for Tailhade had been in trouble with the authorities in 1903 for advocating non-combatant

principles in his *Lettre aux conscrits* in terms remarkably similar to those Owen was to use in his letters from the front. Tailhade had a voracious interest in contemporary poetry and, indeed, may even have known Romains personally. The likelihood that he introduced Romains's poetry to Owen is increased by the resemblance between his views on military service and those that are contained in some of Romains's poems. (Romains's novel *Verdun*, published in 1938,¹ strengthens this resemblance still further.) 'La Caserne' contains the lines:

L'État ordonne qu'elle y reste, qu'elle y dure.
Chaque jour il lui passe un peu de nourriture,
Et l'emplit de jeunesse neuve chaque année.

Owen would not yet have attained to that intensity of feeling he was later to experience on this subject; when he did, in 1917, he needed no stimulus to expression other than his own emotions and the suffering he saw around him. I do not seek to detract from the impassioned spontaneity of Owen's poetry, but this image of the State 'feeding the barracks with fresh youth every year' and one that occurs earlier in the same poem:

A l'aube, les soldats voulaient dormir encore
Pour demeurer eux-mêmes, pour garder dans l'ombre
Leur liberté blottie entre les draps rugueux—

have so much in common with his conception and his method as to suggest that even in 1913 he may have been attracted to the work of Romains by a similarity of outlook as well as by an interest in technical innovation to which he could respond. If 'La Caserne' reminds the reader in many ways of 'The Send-off' and 'Asleep', another poem from the same volume, 'Pendant une Guerre', is even more remarkable. Romains visualizes a war taking place: he can read of it in the papers but can experience no feelings about it:

La guerre me paraît aussi loin que l'histoire.
Ce souffle d'est si caressant, je ne puis croire
Que sa langue ait passé sur des cadavres verts.

Ces hommes meurent donc dans un autre univers,
Puisque je n'ai pas froid quand leurs veines se vident!
Le front du firmament rêve sans une ride;
Tant pis! Nous n'avons pas besoin de sa pitié.
Mais moi qui voudrais tant être supplicié
Lorsqu'il y a de l'âme ou de chair qui saigne,
Faut-il que rien de toutes ces morts ne m'atteigne?
Moi, je sais que l'on souffre, et je ne souffre pas.

In the sensuous, repulsive imagery of that third line, in the sense of the

¹ This is vol. xvi of the author's *roman-cycle* 'Les Hommes de bonne volonté' (Paris: 1932-46, 27 vols.).

war taking place in another world (compare 'Exposure': 'the flickering gunnery rumbles, Far off, like a dull rumour of some other war') and in the whole desire to participate more actively in the universal suffering there is a very close resemblance to the later Owen.

There have been several excellent and penetrating studies of Owen published in French—indeed, he found a responsive audience across the Channel more readily than across the Atlantic—but none of these suggests the possible derivation of half-rhyme from *Romains*. Unless any clue exists among his unpublished papers all that can be said is that if it has any literary antecedents and is not an original product of his inventive genius, those antecedents are more likely to have been French than Welsh or English, and that *Romains* is the most probable source.

The problem might be more easily capable of solution if one could determine with more certainty when he first evolved the use of half-rhyme. Mr. Blunden, who has had access to more of Owen's papers than I, merely records that 'one cannot be sure when he thought out the use of assonance instead of rhymes'. The earliest use of it that can be identified is, as has been said, 'From My Diary, July 1914', where the isolating of the assonantal words suggests that the writer is experimenting deliberately with something unfamiliar. There is no evidence of his using it again until February 1917 when he wrote 'Exposure'. This gap of three years seems remarkable and at first might suggest that 'From My Diary' was a later poem, the date in the title referring to the experience, not to the actual composition. The only manuscript of this poem does not settle the question; the poem itself is considerably more mature in style than any other poem of similar date that I have seen, but that in itself proves nothing. Mr. Blunden has shown the existence of half-rhyme in at least one other non-war poem; 1915 and 1916 do not appear to have been very productive years poetically for Owen, and in any case other experiments with half-rhyme may have been destroyed or may remain in private ownership.

Of one thing there can be no doubt: the use of half-rhyme in 'Exposure' is a great deal more subtle and more mature than in 'From My Diary'. In spite of the freshness and charm of the earlier poem it gives the impression that Owen is not wholly master of his new medium. Its spasmodic quality is consistent with a diary record, but the regularity of its pattern—every line is end-stopped—is dictated as much by an experimental, hesitant use of half-rhyme which will not attempt run-on lines where the assonantal word occurs elsewhere in the sentence than at the beginning. The diction, too, which in Owen's early work is always inclined to lushness, is here largely governed by half-rhyme; two of the words for the use of which W. B. Yeats censured Owen,¹ 'bards' and 'maid', owe their inclusion rather

¹ *Letters on Poetry from W. B. Yeats to Dorothy Wellesley* (Oxford, 1940), p. 124.

to their assonantal than to their connotative value. This is sometimes, though less noticeably, true of Owen's best work in this medium: the manuscripts show that at times his method was to jot down marginally lists of possible pairs of words and then build the poem round them. In 'Exposure' there is a use of half-rhyme so much more confident and masterly as to imply very considerable practice in the meantime. No longer does he confine himself to monosyllabic assonance; nowhere here do we suspect a conflict between assonance and sense: 'knife us' as an echo to 'nervous' is ambitious but by no means jarring, so well does it fit its context. Half-rhyme is even used occasionally and unobtrusively within the line (flake/flock, love/loath); and by using longer lines he assimilates it better into the structure of the poem, no longer giving it the artificial prominence of its position in 'From My Diary'.

From this date Owen uses half-rhyme much more frequently and with ever-increasing mastery, coming to realize its fullest possibilities at a time when his thought and expression were reaching maturity too. In 'From My Diary' the half-rhyme adds charm to the poem; in the war poems it plays an integral part in the poem as a whole. It is no coincidence that of the fourteen printed poems in which he uses half-rhyme thirteen should have been written in the last twenty months of his life and of those only two ('Song of Songs' and 'The Roads Also') should be unconnected with war. These poems where he was 'not concerned with Poetry' were the ideal testing ground for this new medium which offered so happy a compromise between the ordered neatness of rhyme and the shapelessness into which unrhymed verse can so easily lapse. It was particularly conducive to that impression of easy, unpretentious, colloquial speech at which he aimed. The rugged ordinariness of speech, and even slang, on which he relies is well matched by the unobtrusiveness of this device which allows the verse to acquire a more naturalistic movement and suits it particularly for such monologues as 'A Terre'.

The metres in which he uses half-rhyme seem generally designed to avoid bringing the dissonance into undue prominence. Only in 'Arms and the Boy', 'Wild with all regrets', and 'Strange Meeting' does he write in half-rhymed couplets throughout ('A Terre' begins in couplets but introduces variations in its later sections). Elsewhere his stanza forms show all the delight in variety and experiment that is to be expected. 'Exposure' has an *a, b, b, a* pattern, 'Miners' and 'It is not Death' *a, b, a, b*, while 'The Show' and 'Insensibility' are irregular, 'The Show' further diverting attention from the half-rhyme by its division on the page of what is really a quatrain rhyming *a, b, a, b* into two couplets. When he does in a regular metre allow half-rhyme in two successive lines those lines always contain at least eight syllables ('Futility'), generally ten ('Strange Meeting') and in

'Exposure' as many as twelve; in other words, they are sufficiently long to prevent undue emphasis falling on the half-rhyme. The significance of this is well brought out by comparison of the first two stanzas of his early poem where the rhyme-scheme changes:

Has your soul sipped
 Of the sweetness of all sweets?
Has it well supped
 But yet hungers and sweats?

I have been witness
 Of a strange sweetness,
All fancy surpassing,
 Past all supposing.

Ignoring prose meaning as far as possible and concentrating on sound, it will be seen that the first of these has a dignity of movement which the second, with its almost Skeltonic jingle, lacks. Admittedly this is accentuated by the feminine rhymes of this stanza, but the feminine rhymes of 'Exposure' are much less obtrusive. Only as Owen uses it in his later poems does half-rhyme offer a release from rhyme; here it makes very little difference.

Separated by at least eight syllables or used in irregular metres half-rhyme gives Owen's later war-poetry a haunting uneasiness, a sense of frustration and melancholy perfectly in keeping with its mood; the pity which is in the poetry is the more emphatically brought out by it. It is not merely a matter of subconscious disappointment caused to the reader by refusing the rhyme his ear expects while at the same time reminding him that he was expecting it; that enters into it, but the total appeal is more subtle. The late Mr. Michael Roberts was, I believe, the first critic to demonstrate how Owen deliberately chooses his vowels so that there is almost invariably a fall from a high-pitched to a low-pitched one.¹ Thus on three occasions Owen uses 'dearth' or 'earth' as a half-rhyme for 'death', but in each case the higher-pitched 'death' comes first. In 'Arms and the Boy', however, the half-rhyme for 'death' is the still higher-pitched 'teeth' which accordingly precedes it. Again, in both 'The Show' and 'Insensibility' we have the multiple rhymes mean/moan/men and mean/immune/moans/man/mourns in that order, paralleled in 'Strange Meeting' by moan/mourn. There can be little dispute that this arrangement is deliberate, or that it does contribute to the dominant note of hopelessness that swells in these poems. Owen's ear for music is revealing itself here less obviously but to more telling effect than in his earlier poetry; so, too, is his capacity for taking pains with his work. The variant readings of 'Strange Meeting'

¹ *The Faber Book of Modern Verse* (London, 1936), p. 28.

are proof of that, and again illustrate the deliberateness of the falling-vowel sequence by the way in which the various versions never change the order of the rhyme-words.

Even when, as in 'Insensibility', Owen is using a rhyme scheme apparently haphazard in its irregularity, closer inspection reveals an unsuspectedly intricate pattern weaving its way through the whole; a vowel sound may be lost sight of for as many as six lines but eventually finds its echo (feet/fought in stanza 1), and there is a carry-over of rhyme between stanzas which helps to knit the whole together (march/besmirch/much in iv and v); the varying length of the line and the much smaller proportion of end-stopped lines produce a fluidity of movement indicative of Owen's growing mastery. The preoccupation with form and technique which his early work reveals is here being used to good purpose, as in the final stanza where a particularly intricate effect is achieved by the echoing of the end-rhyme mean/immune/man by moans/mourns internally; their assonance is stressed by the repetition of 'whatever' as the subject of both, which simultaneously anticipates its final appearance to mark the transition to the superb stateliness of the last line, contrasting so effectively with the preceding monosyllabic simplicity:

Whatever shares
The eternal reciprocity of tears.

'Insensibility' also contains an example of Owen's habit of interspersing rhyme with half-rhyme: 'trained' in stanza iv has a pure rhyme 'drained' as well as a half-rhyme 'trend'. The same device is used to even more subtle effect in 'A Terre' and finds its most systematic and effective use in 'Futility' which probably represents the fruition of the experiments in the two earlier poems. If 'From My Diary' uses half-rhyme as an added grace in a poem relying for its effect chiefly on rhyme, we have here the logical conclusion of the movement begun there: rhyme is used in 'Futility' merely to point a poem of which half-rhyme is the real medium. Again the use of rhyme is to give, as in 'A Terre', a lingering effect by prolonging a note which has already been satisfied by the half-rhyme, and to give the music of the poem the 'dying fall' that accords so well with the mood. Half-rhyme is perfectly suited to the inconclusive nature of much of Owen's work, the unanswered questions, the ghosts that are so movingly raised but never laid. Of this 'Strange Meeting' is the supreme example, but the sparing and judicious combination of rhyme with half-rhyme is unequalled for its haunting and evocative echoes.

There is another reason why half-rhyme appealed to Owen and why he used it with such consummate skill: not only did it reflect better than rhyme the disintegration of values in the world around him but it met also

a more compelling, inner need. It offered a unique and perfect expression to that hesitancy and lack of self-confidence which all who knew him record. Drawn to half-rhyme primarily by this, he quickly saw its potentialities and its appropriateness to his theme and surroundings. His increasing skill in its use and the recognition it received from his friends seem to me to have played an important part in restoring in the last months of his life some of that self-confidence he lacked.

To pretend that half-rhyme and its possibilities met with immediate or extensive appreciation would be fanciful. In spite of the earlier publication of some of the poems in periodicals its appearance in the 1920 volume caused some bewilderment and misunderstanding. At first the *Times Literary Supplement* (16 December 1920) seemed uncertain of Owen's intention and came very near to attributing this 'curious vagary of technique' and these 'imperfect rhymes' to bad craftsmanship. A few weeks later (6 January 1921) another notice admits the deliberateness but questions the success of their use: half-rhyme 'neither pleases nor is intended to please' but does reinforce the 'chastisement value' of the poems. Only John Middleton Murry in the *Athenaeum* (19 February 1921) sensed adequately the power of the 'single, low, muffled, subterranean' tone which half-rhyme imparted to such poems as 'Strange Meeting'; he saw, too, the importance of its unobtrusiveness, but he concluded:

These assonant endings are indeed the discovery of a genius . . . you cannot imagine them used for any other purpose save Owen's, or by any other hand save his. They are the very modulation of his voice.

That half-rhyme has been used by many other hands since 1918 does not really invalidate Mr. Murry's conclusion. Despite all the freshness it has in his work half-rhyme as exact as Owen's would with extensive use become even more constricting than the rhyme from which it was designed to break away, since so few words share the similarity of structure that it demands. Thus for a monosyllable such as 'war' there will be many rhymes but its half-rhymes are limited to 'were', 'wear' (or 'ware'), 'wire', or compounds ending in those words, while there will be no half-rhyme at all for many words for which rhymes may be found in abundance. To gain its effect it must be used sparingly, the inconclusive, baffled note that it produces being by no means suited to every poetic mood.

It was, however, very well suited to the mood of many poets writing since Owen, but the impression of conscious, deliberate craftsmanship that so exact a use of it creates was not what they required. Feeling that whatever may have been true for the past, in this age a preoccupation with technique and craftsmanship conflicts with sincerity, they have forged for themselves a medium which they feel to be more in keeping with the

urgency of their communication and the uncertainties of their age. In a poem like Louis MacNeice's 'Prognosis' it is no longer the precision instrument that it was for Owen, but even with its edges blunted the affinities with him are still recognizable:

Goodbye Winter!
The days are getting longer;
The tea-leaf in the tea-cup
Is herald of a stranger.

Strictly this is half-rhyme to the eye only, but even allowing for the change of the initial consonant group and the difference between the hard and the soft *g* there is sufficient correspondence between the two words to give a pattern to the stanza. There is, too, a drop from a high- to a low-pitched vowel here, although Mr. MacNeice adheres to this generally with less regularity than Owen. Here, too, the half-rhyme expresses well the restless mood of uncertainty underlying the poem; its inexactness differs clearly from the inexactness of rhyme in, for instance, the same poet's 'Bagpipe Music':

It's no go the merrygoround, it's no go the rickshaw,
All we want is a limousine and a ticket for the peepshow.

It becomes plain as this poem progresses that this is not intended as half-rhyme but as an assonantal approximation to rhyme which, by its very slovenliness, accords to perfection with the cynical, indolent, shallow sophistication against which the poem is directed. Nevertheless its design owes something to Owen's half-rhyme, and the subtleties of its effect, as of the effect of much modern poetry, are more readily appreciated by ears attuned to that slackening of the bonds of rhyme which Owen began.

It is, I think, fair to say that the only living poet who has regularly used half-rhyme with a subtlety comparable to Owen's is Cecil Day Lewis, and it is not irrelevant to draw a further comparison between Owen's love of music and the sensitiveness to that art reflected in Mr. Day Lewis's reading voice. There is nothing imitative or slavish about his half-rhyme; he uses it in metres of his own, generally in combination with pure rhyme. He employs it at times internally as well as finally in the line, but always unobtrusively, sensitively, and appositely. A poem such as 'The Conflict'¹ shows very clearly the debt to Owen in the exact correspondence of the pairs (peace/poise, down/dawn, blood/blade, love/live) and in the vowel music. The first six stanzas have a note of defiance mingled with regret for the past, a dichotomy well reflected in the alternation between pure rhyme and half-rhyme consistently falling from high to low pitch. Then

¹ In *A Time to Dance* (London, 1935), p. 11. It is also in *The Faber Book of Modern Verse*.

in the last two stanzas a more confident note is struck and the order of vowels is reversed, showing a positive rising from low to high. In the second half of the poem, too (the last four stanzas), it is noticeable that the initial half-rhyme of the first stanza ('live') echoes the second word of the stanza, provides a half-rhyme with the first and fourth lines of each of the next two stanzas, and then in the fourth stanza recurs as a half-rhyme in the second and third lines; a similar intricacy of pattern, not immediately apparent to the reader's consciousness, will be found in the four opening stanzas of the poem. This again recalls Owen. Mr. Day Lewis's later work is characterized by a note of sad wisdom very reminiscent of Owen, but to obtain this he relies more on pure rhyme than on half-rhyme.

The Romantic renaissance that English poetry seems to be experiencing at the present may lead to a revival of the use of pure rhyme, but there seems little likelihood of half-rhyme lapsing into desuetude: it is a device too subtle, too varied, and too rich in possibilities for that, calculated as it is to extend the range of that form which comes most naturally to the poet of our age, the personal and intimate lyric.

NOTES AND OBSERVATIONS

JONSON'S VOLPONE AND TRADITIONAL FOX LORE

AMONG the various source studies for Jonson's *Volpone* there is found little or no discussion of animal lore, though Jonson clearly was indebted to a very specific tradition about the fox, namely, the attributed ability of that animal to catch birds by feigning death. This traditional notion Jonson interweaves with the theme of legacy-hunting drawn from Petronius or Lucian. Jonson saw the device of the fox feigning death as an emblem or allegory of the deception of legacy-hunters, and he worked it into the play in such wise as to draw out the parallels between it and the legacy-hunting theme. That Jonson expected his audience to recognize this fox device and therefore to see its parallels to legacy-hunting will, I think, be evident from a view of the frequent occurrences of it throughout the Middle Ages and the Renaissance.

The episode of the fox feigning death is set forth in detail in a book Jonson had in his own library,¹ Conrad Gesner's *Historia Animalium* (1557):

When she [the fox] sees the flocks of birds flying about, she lies prone on the ground and at the same time shuts her eyes, and places her snout on the ground, and holds her breath, and at once assumes the appearance and likeness of one sleeping or rather dead. But when the birds see her thus stretched out upon the ground, thinking her dead, they glide down in flocks, and sitting on her, they mock her, as it were. But the fox devours them with her gaping and threatening mouth as they approach her snout. . . . Sometimes in a period of famine she lies on her back deceitfully simulating death, holding her breath and thrusting out her tongue. When she has been seen, the birds approach as to a carcass and being off their guard are seized. . . . Michael Herr writes the same but adds that the fox before she thus lies on her back rolls about in red clay and dirties herself so that she appears wounded and stained with blood. When ravens, crows, and other birds that are particularly ravenous see her lying thus, rejoicing as it were over a dead enemy, they fly near and are seized, at least one of them.²

Here is the animal structure for Jonson's *Volpone*. Volpone (the Fox) pretends to be dying and then to be dead; Corbaccio (the Raven), Corvino

¹ See the list of his books in *Ben Jonson*, ed. C. H. Herford and P. Simpson (Oxford, 1925), i. 269.

² *Historia Animalium* (Frankfurt, 1603), i. sig. 4L5^v. In 1557 the first edition appeared. (The translation is my own.) The original text reads as follows: 'Cum autem eam sic ad terram abiectam aues despiciunt, mortuam arbitrantur, subuolantes videt, humi strata iacet, simul & oculos claudit, & rostrum in terra deponit, & animam continet, & prorsus vel dormientis, vel potius extinctae speciem similitudinem gerit. Cum autem eam sic ad terram abiectam aues despiciunt, mortuam arbitrantur,

(the Crow), and Voltore (the Vulture) watch and wait eagerly for his death; then just when they hear of his death and rush to bear away his fortune, they find themselves caught and their own fortunes lost.

Turning to the text of the play, we find Volpone saying as he hears the legacy-hunters knock on his door:

Now, now, my clients
Beginne their visitation! vulture, kite,
Rauen, and gor-crow, all my birds of prey,
That thinke me turning carcasse, now they come:
I am not for 'hem yet.¹

The expressed notion of the 'birds of prey' thinking the fox 'turning carcasse' is a very clear reference to the traditional account of the fox and birds.

This piece of fox lore seems first to have entered the literature of western Europe in the first century A.D. through Oppianus, a Roman writer of Greek works on hunting and fishing. The following is a translation of his account, where the story is found already fully developed:

A like device, I have heard, the cunning Fox contrives. When she sees a dense flight of birds, she lies down on her side and stretches out her swift limbs and closes her eyes and shuts fast her mouth. Seeing her you would say that she was deep asleep or even lying quite dead: so breathless she lies stretched out, contriving guile. The birds, beholding, rush straightway upon her in a crowd and tear her fur with their feet, as if in mockery. But when they come nigh her teeth, she opens the doors of guile and cunningly seizes them, and with wide gape cunningly catches her prey, even all that she takes at a swoop.²

After the first century A.D. this description of the fox and birds seems to have rooted itself firmly in the animal literature of western Europe. The

gregatim delabuntur, in eaq; sessitantes tamquam illudunt: at vulpes eas ad rostrum appropinquantes ore hiante atq; imminente, deuorat. . . . In fame aliquando insidiouse mortuum se simulans supina iacet, spiritu compresso exertaq; lingua: quo viso aues tanquam ad cadauer accedunt, & incautae corripiuntur. . . . Eadem scribit Mich. Herus, sed addit vulpem priusquam ita se resupinet, in argilla rubra voluntari inquinariq; vt vulnerata & sanguine cruenta appareat, & quod vbi ita iacentem viderint corui, cornices, & aliae aues praesertim rapaces, gaudentes tanquam de hoste mortuo, aduolantes comprehendantur, vna saltē ex eis.'

¹ *Volpone*, I. ii. 87-91. (I have used the Herford and Simpson edition for quotations from the play.) Following this passage is the one in which Volpone speaks of himself as 'a foxe / Stretch'd on the earth, with fine delusive sleights, / Mocking a gaping crow'. This is a reference to the fable of the fox, the crow, and the cheese. It is quite distinct from the reference to the fox as a 'carcass', for the latter cannot be fitted into the framework of the fable; it has no place there, and can only refer to the traditional lore of the fox deceiving the birds. In *Volpone*, v. ii. 63-7, Volpone speaks of himself as about to be 'carrión' for the three bird characters when they are to hear of his death.

² *Halieutica*, ed. A. W. Mair, The Loeb Classical Library (New York, 1928), Bk. ii. 105-19. Oppianus draws this description into the *Halieutica*, a book on fishing, as an analogy to a similar device of the sea frog.

following list of its occurrences is not intended to be exhaustive, but it will show how persistent the tradition was from Oppianus in the first century¹ to Jonson at the end of the sixteenth. It occurs, among others, in these writers and works: Oppianus, Aelianus, the Greek and Latin Physiologus, Isidore of Seville, Rhabanus Maurus, Hildebert of Mans, Hugh of St. Victor, Philippe de Thaon, Alexander of Neckam, Odo of Ceritona, Albertus Magnus, Guillaume le Clerc, Vincent of Beauvais, Jacques de Vitry, the Middle English Bestiary, Bartholomaeus Anglicus (translated by Stephen Batman in 1582), William Caxton,² Pierre Gilles, George Agricola, Conrad Gesner, and John Maplet. After the publication of *Volpone* in 1608, the tradition continued with Edward Topsell and John Swan to the first third of the century. I have not attempted to trace it further. In medieval iconography two occurrences of it are to be found in miniatures³ of thirteenth-century French bestiaries.⁴ One of these miniatures pictures the fox lying on his back with his tongue hanging out while three birds resembling crows or ravens fly down upon him. The other shows three foxes, one of which is lying on his back with five or six birds descending upon him. These occurrences in literature and medieval art are sufficient to indicate how thoroughly well known was this anecdote throughout western Europe during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. There can be no reason to doubt that both Jonson and his audience were familiar with it.

D. A. SCHEVE, F.S.C.

¹ The tradition does not begin with Oppianus, however, but goes back to earlier Greek writers and probably beyond them to writers of India and Egypt. But its entrance into western Europe seems to have been through Oppianus and the Physiologus.

² It is of interest to note that this tradition produced one of the tales in the well-known book *Thystorye of Reynard The Foxe* as Caxton translated its title. Chapter twenty-four, 'How Corbant The Roke Complayned On The Foxe For The Death Of His Wyf', tells how the fox caught the rook's wife by pretending to be dead on the heath.

³ Another miniature of the fox is described by Otto Keller in *Die Antike Tierwelt* (Leipzig, 1909), p. 88: '... der Fuchs wie er sich totstellt, in einer Miniatur aus dem Jahre 1100.' In manuscript bestiaries there are probably many more such illustrations of the fox.

⁴ These miniatures are reproduced by C. Cahier and A. Martin in *Mélanges d'archéologie* (Paris, 1851), ii, plates xxi and xxx.

ADDISON'S PORTRAIT OF THE NEO-CLASSICAL
CRITIC

(The *Tatler*, No. 165)

THIS portrait is a transposition to a more farcical key of parts of two scenes from Molière's *Critique de l'École des femmes*. In the manner of La Bruyère, Addison sketches his character in action. The scene he describes bears a striking resemblance to the first part of Scene iii of Molière's little comedy. Bickerstaff (Addison) is at a friend's house, chatting with his friend's wife and daughters, when Sir Timothy Tittle, the critic, enters. Sir Timothy appears to be out of breath. He is puffing and blowing. He calls for a chair at once. (Uranie and Élise are chatting when Clémène, a ridiculous *précieuse*, enters. Clémène calls for a chair at once: Eh! de grâce, ma chère, faites-moi vite donner un siège.) Bickerstaff asks Sir Timothy if he is ill. He replies that he is 'quite spent'. (Uranie asks Clémène what is the matter. She replies that she is 'quite spent'.—Je n'en puis plus.)¹ Sir Timothy begins to mutter curses to himself. The young ladies ask him solicitously if someone has hurt him. He does not reply but goes on talking to himself. (*Uranie*.—Sont-ce les vapeurs qui vous ont prise? *Clémène*.—Non. *Uranie*.—Voulez-vous que l'on vous délace? *Clémène*.—Mon Dieu non. Ah! *Uranie*.—Quel est donc votre mal? et depuis quand vous a-t-il pris?) Bickerstaff discovers from Sir Timothy's mutterings that he has been to a rehearsal of a new play. Sir Timothy, in response to Bickerstaff's remark that he must have attended a rehearsal, bursts into a tirade against a play with so many changes of scene that Sir Timothy is worn out from moving about. (Clémène replies to Uranie's questions: that she has been ill for over three hours, that her illness came on at the Palais-Royal. Uranie doesn't understand. Clémène explains that she has seen that 'wretched rhapsody', *L'École des femmes*. She is still faint with nausea caused by the play.) Here the similarity between Clémène's behaviour and that of Sir Timothy ends. Clémène is sick because of the indecency of the play she has seen. Sir Timothy is exhausted because he has had to cover so much distance, the author having been so inconsiderate as to violate unity of place. In the discussion which follows, however, there are points of resemblance to the discussions in *La Critique* (Scene vi). One of the young ladies, disgusted with Sir Timothy for raving over trifles, decides to take issue with him, as Uranie and Dorante take issue with Lysidas, the critic, in Molière's play. Uranie says: 'J'ai remarqué

¹ In Boyer's *Royal Dictionary* (London, 1699), I find the following entry under the word *pouvoir*: 'Je n'en puis plus (je suis dans un grand accablement).' *I am quite spent.*

une chose de ces Messieurs-là; c'est que ceux qui parlent le plus des règles et qui les savent mieux que les autres, font des comédies que personne ne trouve belles.' Bickerstaff's young lady says: 'I have heard . . . that your great Criticks are always bad Poets.' Dorante says: 'Je voudrais bien savoir si la grande règle de toutes les règles n'est pas de plaire.' And later in this scene (vi), he expresses the same idea: 'Je dis bien que le grand art est de plaire.' These words are quite close to Addison's; for Bickerstaff's young lady says: 'I should think the greatest Art in your Writers of Comedies is to please.' Other people besides Molière had made such remarks and Addison could have found them elsewhere.¹ But, following as they do such an obvious imitation of Molière, it seems likely that Addison did take them from Molière. And it is almost certain that a remark of Uranie's in the same scene suggested the most ludicrous of Sir Timothy's *mots de caractère*. Uranie tells Clémène that she has seen the play which so disgusted Clémène and that she found it most amusing. Bickerstaff's young lady tells Sir Timothy that she saw the last comedy which he criticized severely and that she laughed heartily at it. At which Sir Timothy exclaims: 'But, Madam, you ought not to have laughed; and I defie any one to show me a single Rule that you could laugh by.' 'Ought not to laugh!' says she. 'Pray who should hinder me?' 'Madam,' says he, 'there are such people in the world as Rapin, Dacier and several others, that ought to have spoiled your Mirth.' These remarks of Sir Timothy were probably suggested by Uranie's speech: 'Pour moi, quand je vois une comédie, je regarde seulement si les choses me touchent; et, lorsque je m'y suis bien divertie, je ne vais pas demander

¹ The idea that critics who make a great show of their knowledge of the rules are usually unsuccessful authors is a variant of the Prince de Condé's witticism at the expense of d'Aubignac: 'Je sais bon gré à l'abbé d'Aubignac d'avoir si bien suivi les règles d'Aristote, mais je ne pardonne point aux règles d'Aristote d'avoir fait faire à l'abbé d'Aubignac une si méchante tragédie.' He was referring to d'Aubignac's *Zénobie*. The prince's witticism is quoted by Saint-Évremond in *De la Tragédie ancienne et moderne*.

The belief that a play is good if it pleases the public is not peculiar to Molière among French critics of the seventeenth century. As Despois has pointed out, even d'Aubignac has respect for the spontaneous judgement of the public: 'Le peuple est le premier juge de ces ouvrages . . . j'entends par le peuple cet amas d'honnêtes gens qui s'en divertissent, et qui ne manquent ni de lumières naturelles, ni d'inclinations à la vertu, pour être touchés des beaux éclairs de la poésie et des bonnes moralités.' *Deux Dissertations concernant le poème dramatique*, quoted by Despois, *Oeuvres de Molière*, iii. 359, n. 1.

Among the French writers who believed that the end of art is to please, we find Racine, who states the idea in words quite similar to Molière's. In the preface to *Bérénice*, Racine tells us that some people objected to his play because it had no intrigue, saying that they believed such simplicity of action must surely be a violation of the rules. Racine asked these critics if the play had bored them. They replied that it had not; that they had been moved at several points, and that they would see it again with pleasure. 'Que veulent-ils davantage?', asks Racine. 'Je les conjure d'avoir assez bonne opinion d'eux-mêmes pour ne pas croire qu'une pièce qui les touche et qui leur donne du plaisir puisse être absolument contre les règles. La principale règle est de plaire et de toucher. Toutes les autres ne sont faites que pour parvenir à cette première.' *Oeuvres*, ed. Meanard, ii. 378.

*si j'ai eu tort, et si les règles d'Aristote me défendoient de rire.*¹ (Italics mine.) Uranie's words are the satirical *reductio ad absurdum* of reverence for the rules. Transferred to Sir Timothy, who speaks them seriously, they are the finishing stroke of Addison's caricature.²

What Addison did not get from Molière is the idea of having his critic complain of being worn out because the action of the play he was watching shifted from place to place. This is delightful buffoonery and a telling thrust at the literal-minded critics and their arguments for unity of place.

KATHERINE E. WHEATLEY

DAVID COPPERFIELD: FROM MANUSCRIPT TO PRINT

A COMPARISON of the manuscript of *David Copperfield* with the corrected proofs³ throws some interesting light on the collaboration of Dickens with his printer. Dickens was accustomed to write his novels on loose slips of paper measuring $8\frac{1}{2} \times 7\frac{1}{2}$ in. Approximately 30 of these slips filled in his normal handwriting provided enough copy for a monthly serial number of 32 pages. Approximately 30; but Dickens seems never to have made an accurate reckoning. Owing to the copious corrections and interlineations in his manuscript, it would have been difficult for him to count how many words he had written; and though he must have kept his eye on the number of sheets he was filling, that number was no more than a rough guide. Twenty-eight sheets of copy was found to produce $33\frac{1}{2}$ pages of type for *Copperfield* Part XII, but 31 sheets for Part XVI produced no more than

¹ Racine also satirizes critics like Sir Timothy whose pleasure is spoiled by supposed violations of the rules: 'Mais je n'aurois jamais fait si je m'arrêtois aux subtilités de quelques critiques, qui prétendent assujettir le goût du public aux dégoûts d'un esprit malade, qui vont au théâtre avec un ferme dessein de n'y point prendre de plaisir, et qui croient prouver à tous les spectateurs, par un branlement de tête et par des grimaces affectées, qu'ils ont étudié à fond la *Poétique d'Aristote*.' Première préface d'*Alexandre, Œuvres*, ed. Meunard, i. 527.

² Hurd gives no source for this essay in his edition of Addison's *Works* (London, 1854).

Aitken suggests that Henry Cromwell was the model for Sir Timothy Tittle. The *Tatler* (London, 1898-99), iii. 270 n.

Another editor of this essay, Professor Theodore O. Wedel, has the following note on *Rapin* and *Dacier*: 'French critics who championed the strict rules of French (and supposedly classical) drama, such as the unities of time and place. English critics, mindful of Shakespeare and the Elizabethan freedom from rules, never entirely succumbed to continental example.' *Selected Essays by Joseph Addison* (New York, 1929), p. 419. Apparently Professor Wedel means to imply that this particular essay illustrates English independence as compared with French subservience to formalism, an independence which the English owe to the influence of Shakespeare and the Elizabethan age in general. It should be noted that here Addison, in his refusal to 'succumb entirely to continental example', is mindful, not of Shakespeare, but of continental example.

³ Victoria and Albert Museum Library: Forster 48 A 10, 11; 48 B 16.

31½ pages. An exact assessment of the copy needed for a Number was unnecessary, however, for Dickens knew that whether he provided too much or too little he could rely on adjustments at proof stage to fill the right number of printed pages.

The copy sent to Bradbury and Evans for printing was almost invariably a much corrected first draft. I can find no evidence that Dickens ever dictated to an amanuensis or used a secretary to make a fair copy, and I can recollect only one instance in which he seems to have taken the trouble himself of copying his corrected draft.¹ There was indeed no time for what a modern printer regards as normal courtesy from his author. For though a novel might start upon its voyage of nineteen monthly issues with enough material in hand for two numbers, when the novel was well launched Dickens, as his correspondence shows, rarely completed a number earlier than the twentieth day of the month preceding publication. Bradbury and Evans, therefore, had to make do with copy obscure enough to daunt the most experienced compositor. Not only was it written in a small hand with all too little space left between the lines for the numerous corrections and interlineations, but the text was sprinkled with peculiar proper names and with phonetic spellings of standard English and, in *David Copperfield*, of the Yarmouth dialect. The difficulties presented even to a compositor accustomed to Dickens's hand may be gauged by the printer's setting up 'Mr. Dick was very partial to going abroad' for 'Mr. Dick was very partial to ginger bread'. But it is remarkable how few misreadings of this kind Dickens found to correct. The printer did his job accurately and swiftly, and left little evidence behind of his handling the manuscript. I have noticed none of the finger marks and pencilings which a modern author finds on his typescript when it returns from the printing house. Some sheets of manuscript bear the compositor's name in pencil at the head, and others have been divided latitudinally across the centre, the lower half bearing a starred numeral corresponding to the number of the original sheet: this I take to be evidence of distribution of the copy between several compositors.²

It is not clear whether Dickens was accustomed to keep the copy by him until he could send the completed Number to the printer. His letters show that on occasion he sent off the copy in batches as he wrote it. Thus he writes on 4 July 1849 to Evans about *Copperfield* Part IV,

the enclosed is only a portion of the first chapter, but as Browne's first subject is in it, it had better be set up;

¹ The sheet on which Staggs's Gardens is described in *Dombey and Son*, Ch. VI, is so clean and so conspicuously different from its neighbours in that respect that I am forced to conclude that Dickens had decided to make a fair copy of a passage which had involved him in unusually heavy corrections.

² My conjecture is confirmed by Dickens's letter of 29 Oct., 1865, to Mrs. Procter.

and again on 10 July 1849:

I send you, by this Post, 9 slips of copy, containing Mr. Browne's second subject. Get it up *with all speed*, and send a proof to him . . . and another to me, that I may know exactly where I am, which is important to the construction of the No.

But though Hablöt Browne needed some directions for his illustrations, he did not always work from a proof. We are told by David Croal Thomson¹ that

when author and artist lived near each other, Dickens would sometimes drop in and read a portion of the novel he was writing, telling the artist that he desired the illustration taken from certain passages, and the whole scene would then be considered and thought out. . . . At other times, however, Dickens would write out lengthy notes, partly literal extracts from the text and partly condensation.

One or two of these notes, for *Nicholas Nickleby* and for *Dombey and Son*, still survive;² but Dickens does not appear to have used this method of direction for *David Copperfield*.

The corrected proofs of *Copperfield* consist of two sets of galley proofs of Part I, one set of page proofs of Parts II to XVIII, and two sets of page proofs of Part XIX–XX. It seems unlikely that Parts II to XIX–XX were first set up in galley, for time was short; and, as we shall see, the bulk of the correction was necessarily done in page proof. We can be almost certain that Part II was not set up in galley, for we find Dickens writing of it to Evans as early as 5 May 1849:

I send you herewith, the end of the number. If it should make a little too much (as I think it may) let them begin Chapter 5 on page 46, where there is now a great blank.

The implication of the last sentence quoted is that Dickens had already seen page proofs of at least Chapter IV and possibly of Chapter V as well.

There was not infrequently 'a little too much'. In every Number except V, X, XI, XIV, XVI, XVIII, and XIX–XX, the proofs show what was called 'over-matter' extending, in Part VI, to as much as 96 lines of print. Dickens was so well accustomed to this happening that he could write to a correspondent on 8 January 1848, when *Dombey and Son* was drawing to a close:

I never accept an engagement for about this day in the month: being always liable, if my proofs are late, to have to revise them at the printers, and if there is too much matter (as is the case this month) to take it out, and put them all to rights and leave them on the press.

But the amount taken out rarely corresponded at all exactly to the amount

¹ *The Life and Labours of Hablöt Knight Browne 'Phiz'* (London, 1884), p. 63.

² *The Letters of Charles Dickens*, ed. W. Dexter (London, 1938), i. 824, ii. 17, 19; Thomson, op. cit., pp. 73 f.

of 'over-matter'. Thus in Part VI Dickens saved little more than 50 of the 96 lines excess; and in Part IX, where there were 58 lines excess, he saved 40 but inserted the equivalent of six more, adding as a note to the printer, 'the over-matter must be got in somehow—by lengthening the page'. This expedient was needed only in extreme cases, a 51-line page then taking the place of a page of 50 lines of type. But where the over-matter was small, less drastic methods were employed. In Part XIII, for example, where there were a mere 11 lines too many, the printer preferred to save the space by resetting a letter, quoted at the end of Chapter XI, in smaller type; and on numerous occasions a small saving was readily made where the final words of a paragraph overlap into a new line.

Dickens disliked giving his readers short measure. The text of a Number must end well down on the thirty-second page, and the gaps between the chapters must be kept as small as possible. 'Couldn't the end of the *next* chapter [i.e. Ch. XLIV], which is crowded, be brought over to the following page?' he asks on the proofs of Part XV, 'then, the blank at the end of the No would be avoided'. In that Number he had provided the right amount of copy; but in Parts XV and XVIII, where a third of the last page is blank, Dickens set himself to fill the gap with new matter, and the printer helped him out by reducing the 50-line page to a page of 49 lines.

When the time comes for an edition of Dickens which may justly be called 'standard', the editor will have to weigh these deletions and additions in determining his text. He will, of course, recognize that not all the changes in proof were made to reduce over-matter or to fill out a deficient Number. He will observe, for example, that though the proofs show that the song Rosa Dartle sang in Chapter XXIX was 'The last Rose of Summer', the Part in which that chapter occurs contained no over-matter, and that Dickens was therefore guided by some other motive in concealing the name of the song. He will also perhaps conclude that it was not because Part IX was 58 lines too long but through fear of being suspected of irreverence that Dickens deleted what the manuscript shows to be an after-thought, describing the beginning of the sermon David heard soon after falling in love with Dora—'A sermon was delivered—about Dora, of course—beginning "in the first chapter and first verse of the Book of Dora, you will find the following word, DORA"'. There are many other passages which will tax the editor's critical acumen more severely. But he will have an arguable case if he decides that many of the deletions in proof must be added to the standard text and many of the additions relegated to the apparatus. Why, he may ask, was a capital scene rejected in which Steerforth successfully exerts his charms to prevent Mrs. Gummidge from 'thinking about the old 'un'? Not, he may argue, because Dickens was in any way dissatisfied with it, but rather because it could most readily be

spared from a Number with 66 lines more than the printer could compress into 32 pages of type. Since a 'standard' edition of Dickens is not yet contemplated, the reader may wish to see at least this one passage which might be restored to the text. It was replaced in proof by the ninth paragraph before the end of Chapter XXI, and is published here for the first time by the kind permission of the Director of the Victoria and Albert Museum.

As to Mrs. Gummidge, he roused that victim of despondency with a success never attained by any one else (so Mr. Peggotty informed me) since the decease of the old one. Mrs. Gummidge, as usual, was taken poorly in her spirits when we showed a disposition to be merry, and was as usual adjured by Mr. Peggotty to cheer up.

'No, Dan'l,' said Mrs. Gummidge, shaking her head, 'I gets worse and worse. I had far better go into the House to-morrow morning afore breakfast.'

'No, no,' cried Steerforth, 'don't say so! What's the matter?'

'You don't know me, sir,' said the doleful Gummidge, 'or you wouldn't ask.'

'The loss is mine,' said Steerforth, coaxingly, 'but let us know each other better. What's the matter?'

Mrs. Gummidge shed tears, and stated her unfortunate condition in the usual terms. 'I'm a lone lorn creetur', and every think goes contrary with me!'

'No?' cried Steerforth. 'Why, we must be designed by Heaven for one another. I'm a lone lorn creature myself, and everything has gone contrary with me from my cradle. Mr. Peggotty, will you change places, and allow me to sit next her?'

The immediate effect of this on Mrs. Gummidge was to make her laugh. 'You lone and lorn!' cried Mrs. Gummidge, peevishly. 'Yes! Your looks is like it!'

'They are as like it as yours are,' said Steerforth, taking his seat beside her.

'Indeed!' said Mrs. Gummidge, with another laugh.

'Ay, indeed!' cried Steerforth. 'Come! Let us be lone and lorn together. Everything shall go contrary with us both, and we'll go contrary with all the world.'

It was in vain for Mrs. Gummidge to resist this league, or to try to push him away. He sat there all the rest of the evening; and whenever Mrs. Gummidge began to shake her head, repeated his proposal. The consequence was, that Mrs. Gummidge was continually laughing and pushing him, and had so little leisure for being miserable that she said next day she thought she must have been bewitched.

J. B.

CORRESPONDENCE THE NAMING OF CHARACTERS

THE EDITOR, *The Review of English Studies*.

Sir,

Your contributor I. P. Watt, 'The Naming of Characters in Defoe, Richardson and Fielding' [R.E.S. xxv (1949), 289–304], is perhaps right in implying that the most famous person connected with the name Grandison was Barbara, Duchess of Cleveland, though as her surname was Villiers, she was not in any sense a 'bearer' of the name. But it is doubtful whether 'in the name of the perfect man we can detect a train of thought which suggests Richardson's suppressed admiration of rakery'. In Clarendon's *History of the Great Rebellion*, widely read in Richardson's day, her father is mentioned as a young man only less perfect than the great Sir Charles in that he fought duels. Clarendon describes William Villiers, Viscount Grandison, who fell at the siege of Bristol, as 'a young man of so virtuous a habit of mind that no temptation or provocation could corrupt him: so great a lover of justice and integrity, that no example, necessity, or even the barbarity of this war, could make him swerve from the most precise rules of it; and of that rare piety and devotion, that the court or camp could not show a more faultless person, or to whose example young men might more reasonably conform themselves' (*History of the Great Rebellion*, vii. 133). If it is merely a coincidence that Sir Charles bears the name of Clarendon's young hero then it is a very striking one.

Harriet Byron's surname has gathered round it rather unsuitable associations since the Romantic Revival: but Sir John Byron was another of Clarendon's virtuous characters. The Christian names of Sir Charles and Harriet (the English form of Henriette) might also indicate that the great history of the Civil War was in Richardson's mind during the composition of *Sir Charles Grandison*.

ELSIE ELIZABETH DUNCAN-JONES

Sir,

Mr. I. P. Watt in his penetrating analysis of this theme tells us (R.E.S. xxv. 337) that 'the novel had to wait until *Eugénie Grandet* and *Anna Karenina* for titles where the inclusion of the heroine's surname emphatically asserts the social and family setting as an essential element in the story'. I cannot answer for essence or emphasis. But the Oxford *Annals of English Literature* gives me *Lady Julia Mandeville* (1763), *Juliet Grenville* (1776), *Anna St. Ives* (1792), *Clara Lennox* (1797), *Rosamund Gray* (1798). I looked no further. These rare exceptions do not invalidate Mr. Watt's thesis.

R. W. CHAPMAN

REVIEWS

Citizen Thomas More and his Utopia. By RUSSELL AMES. Pp. 230. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1949; London: Geoffrey Cumberlege. \$3.50; 20s. net.

Instead of a Humanist *jeu d'esprit*, of which he will have none, Mr. Ames has made the attempt to treat *Utopia* as a Marxist manifesto. More is not allowed to speak as a genius, interpreting the needs and desires, the longings and laughter, problems and perplexities of the human race at a given moment in history, though surpassing, as genius will, the limits of his place and time. Mr. Ames insists that in his doings, as in his writings, More was nothing but a spokesman, delegated to put forward the views and policies of the London middle class, principally that of the Company of Mercers. So far from resisting the new capitalist movement, More is taken to have been himself at the head of it, one of the true progressive spirits, speaking for the vested interests of the City of London, and Mr. Ames accepts somewhat lightly the questionable evidence that More was himself a member of the London Mercers.

In his agricultural policy and in his attitude to the woollen industry More's views coincided with those of the Mercers. This is indeed a fact that might have been urged to give some substance to Mr. Ames's thesis, but which, owing to his superficial knowledge of the period, he completely ignores. Perhaps this is just as well, for the policy of the Mercers, so far from being progressive in these particular aspects, actually upheld the Gild organization against the assaults of the new capitalism, represented by another powerful group of the London middle classes, the Clothiers. Whereas members of the medieval Gilds were independent workers and traders, the Clothiers employed paid labour. Under the Gild system the spinner bought his wool, turned it into yarn, sold it to the weaver, who turned it into cloth and sold it to the fuller for processing, after which it might be exported as *pannus intonsus* or sold again to shearers and dyers before the finished product was put on the market. This was the medieval system. The Clothiers, on the contrary, not only bought up the wool but owned the very looms on which paid labourers turned it into cloth either in their own houses or in factories, which were making their first appearance about this date. It was under this new system that everything came 'into a fewe riche mens handes'¹ and 'a certain conspiracy' at that,² causing a state of affairs 'where moneye beareth all the stroke', so strongly condemned by Hythloday.³

In order to circumvent Gild regulations the capitalist manufacturer removed the woollen industry out of the towns, which consequently were falling into the common decay that contemporary sources so universally deplore. Nor was this all. The activities of the Clothier caused a wholesale rise in the price of wool, without any corresponding boom for agricultural produce,⁴ so that, as Hythloday

¹ *Utopia*, ed. J. H. Lupton (Oxford, 1895), p. 55; cf. 106-7.

² *Ibid.*, p. 303.

⁴ James E. Thorold Rogers, *A History of Agricultural Prices in England* (Oxford, 1882), iv. 328, 292.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 104.

says, 'the pryce of wolle is so rysen that poore folkes, whiche were wont to worke it and make cloth of it, be nowe able to bye none at all. And by thys meanes verye manye be fayne to forsake worke, and to gyue them selfes to ydelnes'.¹ Landowners, on the other hand, were induced to inclose land, not as in the fifteenth century in order to consolidate holdings for large-scale farming, but so as to be able to turn tillage into pasture and increase their wealth by producing wool instead of corn.² In consequence considerable numbers of agricultural labourers were turned out of their homes and jobs under exactly those circumstances Hythloday so graphically describes in *Utopia*,³ and farms and whole villages were depopulated and falling into decay.

As it turned out in after centuries the new industrial organization was to make England prosperous. What could be seen by contemporaries, or the more discerning among them, was what appeared to be a universal decay—of great cities, villages, and farms—the beginnings of that calamitous ruin of agriculture which, later in the same century, was to cause such untold poverty and distress. Hence it hardly took a Mercer to react against the new development, and the complaint had been sounded before *Utopia* was written. The case that might have been made for More's voicing the view of the London Mercers is moreover invalidated by the fact that this exactly coincided with the policy of the Tudor monarchs who repeatedly enacted bills against inclosures, upholding the Gilds, repressing the policy of the Clothiers.

On the other hand, at the negotiations with the Hanse at Bruges in 1520 and 1521, superficially referred to by Mr. Ames, we can see More again identifying himself with the interests of the Crown and, more curiously, in this instance with the commercial policy of the Clothiers who exported finished cloth, whereas the Mercers, like the Hanse, sent half-finished cloth out of the country to be finished abroad.⁴ In everything, then, More was true to his own principle of advocating the provision of work for the idle, while proving himself, in his own words, 'the king's good servant'.

If Mr. Ames had been aware of these and many other historical facts, he would perhaps not so rashly have made of More a republican, working to abolish the English monarchy, in order to replace it by a free city league, a revolutionary by far more radical than Cade or Tyler.

It is not unreasonable to connect certain Utopian theories with More's actual activities.⁵ Thus Sir Arthur S. MacNalty has reviewed the Utopian public health service in the light of More's appointment as Commissioner of Sewers,⁶ but Mr. Ames ignores it, just as he has overlooked his appointment to the Commission inquiring into inclosures in Hampshire, appointed by Wolsey in 1517, a fact which seems to have escaped other researchers in this

¹ Lupton, op. cit., p. 54.

² I. S. Leadam, *The Domesday of Enclosures 1517-18* (London, 1897), i. 8.

³ Ibid., p. 53.

⁴ *Hanserecesse von 1477-1530*, bearbeitet von Dietrich Schäfer, iii. 7 (Leipzig, 1905), p. 845.

⁵ Cf. Lupton, op. cit., pp. 33-4, 309.

⁶ 'Sir Thomas More as Public Health Reformer', *Nature*, 23 Nov. 1946, pp. 732-5.

field also, but which becomes striking in connexion with Hythloday's ravings against inclosures.¹

Mr. Ames's references are sometimes wrong and often misleading; to Humanist literature they are almost without exception second-hand.² He ignores the literary and philosophical background of *Utopia*, and his book is in no sense a contribution to scholarship. As the wilful application of a Communist thesis with distortion of established facts to a personality, of which he has not the slightest grasp, and to a period, of which he is grossly ignorant, his book can be safely ignored by serious scholars.

H. W. DONNER

Shakespeare: Sonnets. Edited by H. E. ROLLINS. Vol. I, pp. xix+404; Vol. II, pp. viii+531 (Variorum Edition). Philadelphia and London: J. P. Lippincott Company, 1944. £7 net.

The editor of the New Variorum Edition of the Sonnets has carried out a task which few will envy him. 'No informed reader of Shakespearian scholarship and criticism', he remarks in conclusion, 'can possibly doubt that [the Sonnets] have encouraged and fostered world-wide folly' (vol. ii, p. 399); and no reader of this edition can fail to be informed, or to appreciate the justice of this comment. In the first volume Professor Rollins prints the Quarto of 1609, with variant readings and emendations proposed in important later editions up to 1942, and with comments on the text from all sources. The second volume consists mainly of fourteen Appendixes summarizing fuller discussions and criticisms. These Appendixes, embodying countless opinions on such questions as 'The "Sources"', 'The Friend and Master W. H.', 'The Dark Woman', 'The Rival Poet', represent the digestion of an enormous mass of material, much of which is mere assertion, conjecture, or fantasy. It is not surprising that a note of sarcasm or impatience should sometimes creep into the editor's comments.

Indeed the course of English, American, and German criticism of the Sonnets,

¹ Leadam, i. 81-6, quotes the Commission, dated 28 May [1517], from Patent Roll, 9 Henry VIII, Part 2, M. 6 dorso. The members for Hampshire are found pp. 85-6:

R. Episcopus Wynton'

Johannes Tuchet de Audeley

Willemus Sandys Miles

Johannes Lysle Miles

Willemus Gyfford Miles

Johannes Newport seruiens ad legem

Willemus Pault

Willemus Froste et

Thomas More

} Sutht'

Letters and Papers, For. and Dom., of the Reign of Henry VIII, II. ii, no. 3295, pp. 1054-5, contains an abridged version under the somewhat misleading heading: 'Imparking of Land.'

² Thus he quotes Erasmus either from Nichols or *L. & P.* with hardly any reference to Allen. He nowhere corrects Robynson's translation and occasionally misunderstands even his Tudor English. The quality of his scholarship may be further gauged from his suggestion that More borrowed money from the king in June 1523 (p. 59), whereas *L. & P.* lists the sum under 'Debts by specialties made tempore Hen. VII' (III. ii, no. 3694, p. 1527).

seen thus abruptly foreshortened, can give little cause for satisfaction. Professor Rollins says that 'the greatest advantage of Shakespearian studies seems to be that questions may be asked over and over again, and that nobody pays any attention to the answers . . .' (vol. ii, p. 42). We have a prevailing false assumption that Shakespeare's life and work are an insoluble problem: hence no question is ever considered to be closed, and even the most sober arguments and demonstrations seem to make no progress. But what strikes one most in this department of knowledge is the remarkable immunity from consequences of what would be, in others, disastrous presumption or dishonesty. Sir Sidney Lee's extraordinary change of opinion, for example, escaped effective exposure, and his editorship of the *D.N.B.* has perhaps done more than any other fact to bedevil the ordinary reader's view of the Sonnets. Samuel Butler's exposure of Lee's suppressed vacillations, and of the loud assertions with which he sought to conceal them, was brilliant and should have been final. But Butler himself deprived it of its effectiveness, and so also exemplified a common fault in critics of the Sonnets, in that he did not know where to stop. His work of destruction was magnificent, but he proceeded to discredit it by building a theory at least as wilful as any it was supposed to replace.

If things are as they seem, the Sonnets provide direct evidence concerning Shakespeare's private life, or one phase of it; they must therefore either be explained away, or related intelligibly to an intelligible conception of Shakespeare as a person. They have acted in Shakespeare criticism as a powerful chemical substance precipitating all the latent crudities, falsities, or uncertainties in our idea of Shakespeare. The reactions of scholars and critics are often less valuable in themselves than as indicating the nature of the poetry to which they react. Such a scholar as Gerald Massey illuminates both Victorian thought and Shakespeare's genius when he divides the Sonnets without difficulty into two groups: all those which might suggest moral irregularities in the poet are 'dramatic'; the rest are written in Shakespeare's own person. And when one considers the establishment and growth of Sonnet criticism in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, one can, I think, detect a similar underlying significance in most of the questions pursued. It is no exaggeration to say that the instinctive purpose of most critics was to try to prevent the Sonnets from being taken to mean what they said. The methods of this criticism were apparently historical. Scholars professed to find guidance as to the meaning of the poems in literary conventions, or by identifying the persons concerned with historical characters; but their desire was nearly always, nevertheless, to change the gist of the only direct historical evidence they had, the poems themselves. Thus the efforts to make Shakespeare's friend a 'patron', and that patron an English nobleman, were efforts to reduce the poet-friend relationship to terms which would deprive it of its apparent emotional intensity, to make it a relationship more public than private. These critics did not (and do not) seem to perceive that if the expressions of friendship contained in the Sonnets correspond only to a high degree of esteem, or a recognition of material benefits expected or bestowed, Shakespeare is indeed protected from the charge of emotional extravagance, but is exposed to our contempt for having written so much pathetically inappropriate

stuff. More probably, however, even a final demonstration of the Southampton or Pembroke theory would really leave the essential nature of the Sonnets unchanged. The expressions of love in them would be no less powerful, and, while it would be interesting to learn that the friendship recorded could exist between an Elizabethan poet-actor-playwright and an Elizabethan peer, the content of the relationship would be as difficult to define as it is.

Other attempts to identify the youth of the Sonnets, even if they are less plainly attempts to deprive the friendship of emotional substance—they sometimes try to do the opposite—must come under the same reservation. If the friend could be proved to be Mr. W. H., and Mr. W. H. a boy-actor, or a musician, or a gentleman of the Inns of Court, or a sea-cook—we should, of course, have a light on Elizabethan social history; but the poetry, and the friendship, and the moral and aesthetic properties of both, would be as much on our hands as ever.

It would in fact be a very unusual kind of contemporary document which would tell us more about the personal relationships reflected in the Sonnets than the Sonnets do themselves. If we are really interested in Shakespeare's mind and poetry, we have here far more evidence than we can hope to exhaust the meaning of. If, then, we occupy ourselves with extraneous biographical mysteries, it is a sign either that we are not prepared to accept as true what Shakespeare seems to tell us, or that we do not know what to do with the truth when we have it. Nevertheless, whatever impatience we may feel with the biographical fantasies, we might perhaps conclude that the whole formidable process of search and conjecture was necessary and has even been useful. It has proved, on the one hand, that nothing *can* be proved about the historical identities of the persons in the poems, and, on the other, that the poems have an irreducible personal content, which resists all 'theories' and always reasserts itself. We must deal, in one way or another, with this irreducible personal content, and we do not deal with it by trying to disregard it, by asserting, for instance, that we must look at the poems 'purely as poetry', analyse them from a 'purely literary' point of view. This method took in the past the form of referring to contemporary 'sonneteering conventions', though the part played here by such conventions seems to be negligible. No doubt the writing of poems to express love is itself a convention; but there is only one recognizable literary convention in the Sonnets, and that is the bestowal of immortality on beauty by poetry. A more modern method of excluding the wider issues is to concentrate upon the psychological or metaphysical suggestions of the verse. Of this we have an example in Professor L. C. Knights's conclusion as to the two predominating 'interests' in the Sonnets (which he says do not coincide with 'the ostensible subject'): 'one is the exploration, discrimination and judgement of modes of being—attention consciously directed towards the kind of integration of personality that is implied by the development of technique. The second is an overwhelming concern with Time' (vol. ii, p. 427). This highly intellectual summary is certainly a falsification. It may be profitable, for some special purpose, to analyse poetry in such abstract terms, but it is absurd to present the result to us here as if it were an account of what is really important in the Sonnets.

What it comes to is that, whether we like it or not, the Sonnets will always ultimately be read as Shakespeare's love-poems: they will always make themselves be read, in some degree, as we read Keats's letters to Fanny Brawne. The centre of interest does not lie in 'the facts of the story', but without a consciousness of the story there can be no appreciation of the depth of the interest. We see a supreme poetic imagination struggling with itself and with the conditions of human life. What we may call Shakespeare's 'romantic idealism' involves him in personal relationships which can only be unsatisfactory from the point of view of everyday moral economy. The passionate friendship could never have come into being but for the imaginative power which made Shakespeare a great poet, and which he necessarily bore with him in daily life. The passion and the poetry in the Sonnets are one; only the human object is distinct and recalcitrant, and what is recorded in the series is the dealings of the poetic imagination with its own consequences, and with the obstinate autonomy of the human object, as this becomes clear. Shakespeare's unanalysable power lies in this combination, or identity, of the intensest poetic imagination with a sense of reality from which he can never escape. The cynical or self-accusing sonnets to the mistress, the exalted, tender or humble sonnets to the friend, seem to fit together, seem equally a product of the interplay of imagination and experience, emotion and intellect. It is thus possible to look at the changes of tone and tenour in different groups of Sonnets as analogous to the stages of imaginative development outlined by Keats: Sonnets 1-17 (but not only these) would correspond to Keats's 'chamber of maiden thought', the imagination playing with its realization of beauty; the Sonnets of introspection and speculation as to the friend's 'truth' would show the exploration of the 'dark passages' of Keats's letter. Given the postulates of Shakespeare's 'romantic idealism' and the apparent qualities of the friend, there seems to be nothing in the development of the relationship, as we glimpse it, that we could not expect; the interest consists entirely in Shakespeare's poetic dealings with the matter.

Such an acceptance of the Sonnets at their face-value seems to me the only sensible way of taking them. It is useless for the extreme sceptics of Shakespeare criticism to point to the lack of 'scientific' evidence for the reality of the story. To assume its reality at least renders the Sonnets intelligible; to doubt everything is not only to raise a thousand problems concerning their 'real' meaning, but to deny an existing unity of impression. Such a Pyrrhonism is not a triumph of critical detachment and intellectual superiority; it is the refuge of weak or timid or tired minds. Moreover, the assumption that Shakespeare is concerned with the truth not only makes intelligible the poetry and the passion of the Sonnets, it makes intelligible also the behaviour of scholars confronted with them. Given the historical and social conditions in which Shakespeare criticism has developed, we might say that there is nothing in the story of Sonnet criticism, as in the story of the Sonnets themselves, that we might not expect. Uneasiness, bewilderment, dogmatism, and wilful blindness: these may well be produced by passion and truth, but not by such artificiality, or deliberate or chance obscurity, as we are sometimes invited to see in these poems.

F. T. PRINCE

An Interpretation of Shakespeare. By HARDIN CRAIG. Pp. xii+400. New York: The Dryden Press, 1948. \$5.00.

The approach to Shakespeare needs, as the writer says in his preface, 'Imaginative insight as well as knowledge' (p. v), and in this volume the author of *The Enchanted Glass*, writing with a lucidity which conceals the learning from which it is nevertheless derived, reveals those views upon the significant aspects of Shakespeare's plays which are the fruit of a lifetime of reflection. The preface is a brief document in sanity of criticism in which every teacher will find matter for consideration. And the subsequent analysis of Shakespeare's work, play by play in the assumed order of writing, is full of ripe wisdom expressed with that simplicity and economy which is the heritage of the English tradition in scholarship. There is to be found here a reconciliation of what have sometimes seemed like two conflicting schools, the historical and the aesthetic; it is made by one of the few scholars who, a founder of the first, can speak with equal authority in both. The weight of his learning seemingly laid aside, he gives us the clear distillation of his thought on the art and the humanity of Shakespeare; and in this he does but resemble the subject of his study; for Shakespeare, as he says in his concluding chapter, 'Although no doubt aware of current learning in the field of psychological theory, nevertheless places his characters in the high road of human nature as he knows it' (p. 256).

The arrangement of the book is straightforward. After an introductory chapter on 'Shakespeare as an Elizabethan' the plays are treated in chronological order—or an order as near the chronological as the present state of our knowledge permits—and distributed over the next eleven chapters. A chapter on 'Shakespeare as a Citizen of the World' sums up certain of the findings. The method of study is the same for each play, but there is no inflexible uniformity. The ascertained facts about each play are set before us briefly and with great clarity: what we certainly know or reasonably conjecture about authorship, date, sources, condition of text and relations of the original texts if there are more than one. This sums up in readable form the conclusions of scholarship down to the date of writing; the very beginner in Shakespeare studies can follow it with enjoyment if he has a mind to. A commentary, long or short, on the content, thought, and art of the play forms the main part of most of the sections.

Whether or not we agree with Craig's views—the present writer disagrees, for instance, with his interpretation of the underlying thought of *Troilus and Cressida* and in part with his estimate of the character of Coriolanus—there is matter for consideration in all of them and unobtrusive originality in many. The analysis of *Julius Caesar* is interesting for its study of the relation of that play to Greek and especially to Plutarchan conceptions of tragedy; there is an examination of the progress of Hamlet's mind which makes it clear that he is not a static character, that, in fact, he achieves integration in the course of the play; there is a sane interpretation of Iago as a soldier lacking advancement, and the author dispatches Coleridge's 'motive hunting of a motiveless malignity' with the comment 'That fine phrase has almost wrecked the dramatic interpretation of Iago' (p. 197). *Lear* is a play about kingship, the underlying theme not ingratitude but authority;

in the course of a study of the 'conversion' of Cleopatra there are some interesting generalizations on 'character' in Shakespeare and some pertinent references to the source and its influence. One of the most notable of these analyses is perhaps that of the play of *Coriolanus* and of the chief character himself as 'a pattern of virtue' (p. 287). 'The fundamental quality of Coriolanus is not so much pride as an absolute virtue' (p. 288). Here and in the study of Coriolanus's relation to the mob, new light is thrown on the play and the thought must cross the mind of a reader that it is a light which can be better focused by an American scholar than by the average Englishman, who has, as a rule, less experience in racial discrimination.

This is the kind of book which is, on the whole, better done on the other side of the Atlantic than on this side, a kind which, when it is, as here, supremely well done, is a guide to students and teachers and a welcome companion to the author's fellow scholars.

The picture of Shakespeare which emerges is of a man whose reading of life was valid then as now, in terms, it may be, of the psychological systems so fully examined in *The Enchanted Glass*, but in terms nowise thereby rendered unintelligible to us.

UNA ELLIS-FERMOR

Joseph Quincy Adams. Memorial Studies. Edited by JAMES G. McMANAWAY, GILES E. DAWSON, and EDWIN E. WILLOUGHBY. Pp. x+808. Washington: The Folger Shakespeare Library, 1948. \$10.00.

In one of the most interesting of these papers Professor Matthew W. Black reports on an experiment with time. Shakespeare, he says, preparing himself 'more thoroughly for the writing of *Richard II* than of any other play in the canon', could easily have completed his reading in twenty-four hours. Far other is the condition of the present reviewer. For here is a book as generous in its proportions as the scholar it commemorates was generous in character. It contains about 360,000 words, being thus half as long again as *Finnegans Wake*; its contributors include 43 professors of English; it weighs $3\frac{1}{2}$ lb.

Professor Black challenges the existence of that 'profound historical scholar soaked in the history of England' whom Dr. Dover Wilson believes to have provided Shakespeare with ready-made dramatic material, and he shows that the mind behind *Richard II*, although fairly wide-ranging among books, was scarcely laborious, slow, or disposed to hive its wisdom. When, in fact, this mind failed to find what it wanted in Holinshed's marginal notes it had the habit of applying itself hopefully to that 'lower portion of an inner column' which lay nearest to the eye or nose. It speaks much for Professor Black's caution that after this triumphant glimpse of the essential Shakespeare at work he allows full weight to Dover Wilson's argument from the presence of supposed 'fossil rhymes' in Shakespeare's text. Here, too, he might conceivably have done a little experimenting. To what extent do fossil rhymes turn up in random samples of Shakespeare's blank verse, and to what extent does fossil blank verse turn up in his prose?

This essay makes us look forward with pleasure to Professor Black's New

Variorum edition of the play. Another editor in that series, Professor M. A. Shaaber, joins issue with both Dr. Dover Wilson and the Master of Jesus. What reason have we for supposing that *2 Henry IV* is other than an unpremeditated sequel to *1 Henry IV* occasioned by the immense success of Falstaff on the stage? Not the fact of *1 Henry IV*'s being 'incomplete', for history is always that. Not the late appearance of the Archbishop of York planning further rebellion, for he is brought on in a fuss simply to foreshadow the outcome of the Battle of Shrewsbury. Not the absence of an adequate reconciliation between king and prince, for 'Thou hast redeem'd thy lost opinion' does not mean 'I feel a bit easier about you than I did before, but the final showdown is yet to come'. And not, above all, Shakespeare's failing to exhibit either Henry IV's death-bed or the turning away of Prince Hal's favourites. These traditional occasions may have been envisaged as an effective conclusion to a second part, but equally they may have been envisaged as an effective opening to *Henry V*, a play much more assuredly foreseen by Shakespeare. Moreover, *2 Henry IV* follows very closely the construction of *1 Henry IV*; the effect is almost that of top copy and carbon copy; and this suggests much rather the repeating of a success than the working out of a ten-act organic whole—an anomaly in itself unlikely to be favoured by a practical Elizabethan dramatist. This is a challenging paper drawing us to a reconsideration of Dover Wilson's argument. Does the spectator who sees *1 Henry IV* alone go away unsatisfied, and does the spectator who sees *2 Henry IV* alone fail to understand it? Again experiment seems desirable. The two parts of the play should be performed on successive nights (a thing of which, until recent times, there is no record) and a comparison made of the impressions of several groups of intelligent persons unfamiliar with Shakespeare. Some of the materials for this experiment could readily be come by.

These two contributions by no means exhaust the matter of interest on the history plays alone: thus Professor Thomas P. Harrison, Jun., reporting the discovery in the Folger Library of a copy of an edition of Robert Copland's translation of the *Secretum Secretorum* not listed in the *S.T.C.*, shows incidentally that the author of *1 Henry IV*, like Lydgate, Gower, and Hoccleve before him, was probably familiar with this once popular work on the relations of king and subject; and again Professor Hardin Craig, continuing his fruitful investigations of the influence of Senecan tragedy, displays that tragedy as the door through which Shakespeare made his way to the dramatization of history.

To go further in the notice of individual papers, whether on Shakespeare or on any other of the many aspects of Elizabethan literature dealt with, would be to fall into a mere huddle of names. A notable industry, in both senses of the word, lies behind this volume, and what is perhaps chiefly remarkable is its determined cultivation of literary and interpretative criticism, and of historical investigation designed directly to illuminate the process of literature. It is as if the writers are aware of themselves as increasingly responsible for the liberal education of young people often almost entirely shut up within the cell of their own language. Many contributions are, of course, in the field of conservative scholarship, but the majority reflect an effort to interest and stimulate readers seeking ordinary literary cultivation. The quality of such an endeavour, spreading

through so many universities as are here represented, deserves to be tested by the highest standard. What would Dryden or Matthew Arnold have thought of this book? To ask such a question is at once to acknowledge an element of uneasiness in one's response. Here, one suddenly realizes, are hundreds of pages without an individual voice and without any strong play of ideas. The contributors are learned and intelligent, but each knows the man his neighbour knows. The table of contents sketches a decidedly endogamous society: in a volume centred upon the most nearly universal of poets no poet, no practising man of letters or of the theatre has place; nor is there any substantial indication that scholars in adjacent fields have been invited to step for a moment over the fence. The present is still, one may feel, the vernal season in English studies—and here is, as it were, an orchard of very sufficient acreage with its pear-trees in full bloom. What will the harvest be like? To ask this is to ask whether an adequate cross-fertilization has been assured.

J. I. M. STEWART

A Study of the Prose Works of John Donne. By EVELYN M. SIMPSON. Pp. viii+371. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1948. 21s. net.

Mrs. Simpson's book is so well known to students of Donne that a reviewer of this revised and amplified edition need only indicate how it differs from that of 1924. The quality of her earlier work is shown by the fact that she has not had to modify much the picture of Donne as a prose writer which she drew twenty-five years ago, though she has been able to fill in and make clearer some of its detail. The chapters on *Biathanatos*, *Pseudo-Martyr*, the *Devotions*, and *Letters* have required little change beyond the incorporation of the slight additional knowledge gained in the last quarter-century. Apart from a few bits of information in book-reviews, Mrs. Simpson seems to have noted in each chapter all relevant publications since the first edition of her book, and her references constitute a useful guide to this new material.

She herself has been one of the most assiduous students of Donne's prose in the last twenty-five years, and in nearly every chapter has to record the results of her own researches. The new section on Donne's *Catalogus Librorum Satyricus* in the chapter on the *Juvenilia* summarizes the conclusions she presented in the privately printed (and now scarce) Nonesuch Press edition of the *Catalogus* (1930). Similarly she has amplified the chapter on 'Donne as Man of Letters' by her survey of his reading in classical and foreign authors. This last should do much to correct some widespread misconceptions, in particular the common but ungrounded assumption that Donne read and admired the Spanish mystics. How unsympathetic he was to the claims of mysticism and how unlikely it is that he would have enjoyed the writings of St. Teresa or St. John of the Cross he showed in prose written at very different stages of his life. Two such passages happen to be quoted by Mrs. Simpson (pp. 95-6) in her discussion of 'Donne as Theologian'; they also illustrate a valuable but incidental service her book performs—its bringing together much the most representative selection of Donne's prose now obtainable.

To the account of Donne's theology has been added a discussion of his teaching

about the spiritual life and of the experience which lay behind that teaching (pp. 81-98). Of this only one detail seems open to criticism: influenced probably by a sentence from the *Essays in Divinity* (p. 82) and perhaps also by Gosse, Mrs. Simpson says that for Donne 'conversion' is the first stage in the soul's pilgrimage towards God'. It will be a pity if use of the word 'conversion' here and elsewhere (e.g. pp. 8, 34, 83) misleads some readers into supposing that she attributes to Donne a sudden religious experience of the kind which that word usually connotes to-day, and which in Donne's lifetime was more characteristic of the Catholic and Puritan extremes he criticized than of the Anglican position he found congenial. Mrs. Simpson makes it clear that by Donne's 'conversion' she means a long and gradual process of which the stages are difficult to define, but it is doubtful whether Donne was ever 'converted' in the common sense of the word. His earliest poems and letters show that he was always a Christian—what is often termed his 'conversion' is his deepened consciousness of his own sinfulness, but that had developed long before he decided 'to call his Religion by some newer name than *Christian*' (Pref. to *Pseudo-Martyr*); it is equally clear that he was a convinced Anglican long before he took orders.

The chapter on the *Essays in Divinity*, which Mrs. Simpson rightly claims are of great importance for study of the development of Donne's thought, has been altered and expanded. Mrs. Simpson now thinks that these must have been written earlier than 1614-15, and suggests a date between 1611 and 1615, believing that they occupy a central position between the *Anniversaries*, the *Divine Poems*, and the *Sermons*. She points out a number of close verbal parallels between the *Essays* and some undated and probably early sermons.

In the chapters mentioned so far Mrs. Simpson is presenting mainly the results of her own investigations, and here and wherever else she does so, her argument is convincing. In her account of the 'Medieval and Renaissance Elements in Donne's Thought' she has had to rely on the findings of others, for this is a field of study calling for very specialized knowledge. In the reviewer's opinion this is the least satisfactory chapter in the book, but it would be unreasonable to complain because Mrs. Simpson has presented what is at present the accepted interpretation. This chapter, and one or two places in others, show how little we can rely on some past work on Donne. Whenever Mrs. Simpson presents the results of her own work, there is little room for difference of opinion; when she has to rely on accepted authorities she is sometimes let down by them. For example, she has accepted the argument that Walton must have antedated Donne's reading of Bellarmine (p. 98), which Jessopp advanced on the ground that Bellarmine's famous three volumes were not published till 1593. One would suppose that if Jessopp is reliable anywhere, it is here. And yet he is quite wrong. By 1593 some of Bellarmine's *Disputationes . . . de controversiis* were already in their third edition. The first volumes were issued as early as 1586 and 1588, and in 1588 William Whitaker published an attack on them. There is no reason to doubt Walton's statement. A few minor corrigenda may be noted at the same time: Donne's application to be 'Secretary for Virginia' was probably for the secretaryship of the Virginian Council in London, and is not evidence that he was thinking of emigrating (p. 27); the lines by 'Joannes

Dones' in Coryate's *Crudities* (cited on pp. 47, 143 n., and 310 n.) are almost certainly not by Donne (see *T.L.S.*, 1 Feb. 1936); that Donne read Sacrobosco (p. 123) is uncertain, and his only reference is to an edition published between 1585 and 1602 [see *M.L.R.* xxxiii (1938), 280-1].

To conclude our survey of the differences between this and the first edition, we note that to the chapter on the *Sermons* have been added quotations from and discussions of Coleridge's *Notes on English Divines*, and that the text of Donne's sermon on Psalm 38, v. 9 (now available in G. R. Potter's edition), is omitted, and its place taken by a list of manuscripts of Donne's prose works. Progress made with the chronological arrangement of Donne's sermons—of great importance in tracing the development of his thought—is recorded in the notes on 'Conjectural and Approximate Dates' for the sermons, in Appendix B.

The solid and scholarly quality of Mrs. Simpson's book was immediately appreciated by all who used it. Since 1924 it has remained the best general guide to Donne's prose and thought, and Mrs. Simpson has rendered all students of Donne valuable service by bringing it up to date. Reading it through again one is reminded of the sanity of judgement she has always shown in her evaluation of Donne's achievement in prose. She was never tempted to make undue claims for his trivia, such as the *Juvenilia* or the *Catalogus Librorum Satyricus*. On the other hand, she realizes that much of his prose is, like his poems, the product of deliberate and conscious artistry (on which she has some interesting comments), and that it possesses great intrinsic interest apart from its usefulness as commentary on his poems. 'In the *Essays in Divinity*, the *Devotions*, and the *Sermons*, though we may become fatigued at times, we are conscious of a live mind dealing with problems of fundamental importance.' This is very true. It is to be hoped that the new edition of Mrs. Simpson's book will persuade students to pay more attention to the content and the technique of Donne's later prose, and that her work on the texts will soon be in print to make their study easier.

I. A. SHAPIRO

Peter Hausted's 'Senile Odium'. Edited and Translated by LAURENS J. MILLS. Pp. 202. (Indiana University Publications—Humanities Series No. 19). Bloomington, Indiana, 1949. \$3.50.

It seems to have been due to an academic minor 'war of the theatres' that Peter Hausted's *Senile Odium* found its way into print. A later English play from his pen, *The Rival Friends*, was acted before the King and Queen, during a visit to Cambridge, on 12 March 1632, and was published in the same year. It had been unfavourably received in performance, and Thomas Randolph of Trinity College, whose *Jealous Lovers* was acted during the same visit, when publishing his play, in the prefatory matter made an attack upon the comedy of the Queens' College dramatist. It was apparently to redress the balance of academic opinion in his favour that Hausted decided to publish in 1633 his earlier Latin play, *Senile Odium*, which had been publicly performed by the 'juventus' of his college. Unfortunately the title-page does not give the date of the production, but of the alternatives suggested by G. C. Moore Smith, 1628/9

or 1630/1, Professor Mills gives reasons for preferring the latter or the Christmas season of 1631.

It may be said at once that Hausted was justified in his bid for favourable recognition, and that Professor Mills has done a helpful service in making the play accessible both in Latin and in English. There is no preface to the reader by Hausted himself, but the commendatory verses by three of his friends, if extravagant in their praise, are of special interest. The first is by Edward King of Christ's College, whom Milton was to immortalize as *Lycidas*. The Iambics in which he hails '*Odium Senile, candidi theatri amor*', are among the witnesses that 'he knew/Himself to sing and build the lofty rhyme'. The tributes by two Queens' contemporaries, Edward Kemp and John Rogers, of whom the former calls Hausted 'Monarcha dramatis', are notable for comparing the hostility to Hausted with that recently shown to the aged Jonson, whose *Magnetic Lady* in 1632 had been a failure.

The scene of the play is laid in Frankfort-on-the-Main, and it observes the unity of time and, with modification, of place. The action takes place in front of five 'houses', from which the players enter—that of Theophilus, a senator; of Ludovicus, a quack scientist; of Tricongio, a bookseller; the convent of St. Catherine; and the 'forum', or market-place. The play gets its title from the hatred between the elderly Theophilus and another old senator, Leonhardus. And as in *Romeo and Juliet* the daughter of the former, Felicia, is beloved by the latter's elder son Endomachus. The lover, for no apparent reason, has been in hiding for ten days. His father believes that he has been murdered, and is persuaded by Ludovicus that Aurelius, the friend of Theophilus's son Eugenius, has done the deed. Aurelius is arrested and tried and only escapes execution by the return of Endomachus as suddenly as he had disappeared. Ludovicus has wished to incriminate Aurelius because he loves his supposed niece Menander, whom the quack wishes to marry a boorish young suitor Gorgonius, but who turns out to be another daughter of Theophilus, stolen in childhood.

But before, on conventional lines, the lovers are finally united and the families reconciled, there have been amusing incidents. Theophilus has packed off Felicia to a convent and sends her clothes after her in a box, into which Eugenius and Aurelius thrust Ludovicus, who thinks himself invisible through a stone placed in his mouth. The box, left alone by the carriers while they go for a drink, is found by Endomachus, who lets Ludovicus out and gets in himself so that he may be taken to the convent which now harbours his Felicia.

In Ludovicus, the rapacious charlatan who deludes himself as well as others, Hausted presents a figure belonging to the same group as Subtle in Jonson's *The Alchemist*, though of less formidable quality. Satire of this particular type of quackery is now somewhat outmoded. Nor does modern taste relish as fully as Caroline the spectacle of the bookseller Tricongio, a jovial boon companion with his own sex, but cowering under the assaults, linguistic and physical, of his termagant wife Cotyttia.

In Tricongio's house, however, doubtless as a paying guest, there is an Englishman who, though a minor character, is to the literary historian the most significant figure in the play. Euphues, as he is called, reproduces not only the name

but the distinctive peculiarities of speech of the hero of Lyly's novel. In several cases Hausted translates into Latin actual passages from Lyly's English text; in others he parodies his similes and unnatural natural history. And Euphues instructs his fellow lodger and pupil Gorgonius to make love in the same high-flown lingo. In 1633 it was more than half a century since *Euphues* had been published, and there could be no stronger testimony to the enduring influence of Lyly's stylistic artifices than that Hausted should have thought it worth while to burlesque them for his Cambridge audience.

The quotations from *Euphues* are among the most helpful of Professor Mills's notes, which also indicate echoes from Virgil and Tibullus, Plautus and Terence mingling with Hausted's often bastard Latinity. Reference would have been easier had the lines in each scene been numbered. Grateful recognition must be made of the Professor's arduous achievement in the translation of so long and complicated a play. But on the debit side is his excessive use of slang and of 'swear-words'. In Act I, sc. iv, 'Imo alio mihi iter est' is rendered 'I've gotta go somewhere else'; 'sed ego quo interdum' 'But I must shake a leg'; 'Nequicquam obsecras' 'You shut your trap'; 'saturi' and 'nervus' become 'glut-guts' and 'hoosegow', both hitherto unknown to me. In Act IV, sc. viii, 'Minimum quidem abfuerat quin haec vestes' is Englished as 'Hell, a little more and these duds would have', and 'Felicitate quidem istuc tibi in mentem venit' as 'A damn good thing you thought of that'. These examples might be largely multiplied. They are, in my opinion, unjustified improprieties in this otherwise welcome edition and translation of an attractive academic comedy.

F. S. BOAS

The Poems of William Habington. Edited by KENNETH ALLOTT. Pp. lxx+208 (Liverpool English Texts and Studies). Liverpool: The University Press, 1948. 15s. net.

It cannot truthfully be said that there was a great demand for a new edition of William Habington's poems, but it is pleasant to have it on the growing shelf of seventeenth-century minor poetry. Mr. Allott makes no large claims for his author, calling him 'the undistinguished follower of a tradition, with the characteristic failing—since the tradition is waning—of insipidity'.

A distant follower of Donne, yet hostile to Donne's daring intimacies, a Cavalier without the Cavalier gusto, a juggler with conceits already more cleverly handled, Habington was the singer of a true-love without conflict. His mistress, Lucy Herbert, daughter of Lord Powis, was to this earnest young Catholic the epitome of discretion as well as of innocence:

Cautious she knew never yet
What a wanton courtship meant:
Nor speaks loud to boast her wit,
In her silence eloquent.
 Of her selfe survey she takes,
 But 'tweene men no difference makes.

Perhaps her parents did not altogether approve of her undistinguished suitor, though their opposition cannot have been strong or it would surely have shaken

him out of his 'Platonic' moods; Castara, however, seems to have been 'a well-brought-up girl', timid and conventional, who blushed when she heard Habington name the word Love, let him steal interviews, but would scarcely let him kiss her at parting, so careful she was of her modesty. This suited her lover who declares: 'In all the flames in which I burnt, I never felt a wanton heate.' Mr. Allott comments: 'for him virtue has come to be identified with a tepid circumspection'; a little unfairly, for Habington was sincerely religious as well as anxious not to shock one who

Obeyes with speedy will
Her grave Parents wise commands. . . .

His wooing must have been as mild and easy as the hero's of *The Angel in the House*; but Habington was not so witty and varied a poet as Patmore; his poem-sequence played in a weakly Metaphysical way with the stock images and situations of the Petrarchan tradition as it decayed in the hands of late Renaissance imitators in France and Italy. He participated in the pseudo-Platonic cult fostered in the thirties by Henrietta Maria. Even marriage did not bring him down to earth; their love remained a meeting of angels, not 'bastard to a fleshy touch', though somehow they begot three or four children; and his poems in the Second and Third Parts of *Castara* preserved the obvious turns, the chilly grace of the First.

The religious pieces are, perhaps not surprisingly, lacking in the sensuous profusion of most Catholic verse of the time. He adapts solemn psalms and passages from Job; he broods on death and mutability, and on how man may know God. At times he reads like a Vaughan without the inspiration.

Perhaps his short verse-addresses to friends show Habington at his best, writing sensibly and even brightly in a manner sometimes like Jonson or Francis Beaumont:

of this wine should Prynne
Drinke but a plenteous glasse, he will beginne
A health to Shakespeare's ghost . . .

but such conviviality is rare. He is a retiring poet, prudent, unambitious, and rather dull, despite his love of the country, books, friendship, and Castara.

Mr. Allott has written an interesting Introduction with some new biographical data and a judicious criticism of the poems; his Commentary traces allusions and identifies many personages. He has found a letter in Habington's hand (the only one extant), and has ingeniously dated it. This letter is given as frontispiece, but it does not reproduce very well. The text is based on the 1640 edition, which contained the poet's last additions and revisions. Variants from the 1634 and 1635 editions are given, and a few emendations, particularly of punctuation, have been made from these. There are few difficulties, and little to cavil at in the editor's handling of the text. On p. 51, line 15, the 1634 'Nor' is preferable to 1640 'Not'; and on p. 91 *The Harmony of Love*, line 7, 1640 'And' is at least as good as 1635 'Are'. Mr. Allott has done his work well, and it is good to have a competent modern edition more reliable and informative than Edward Arber's.

G. BULLOUGH

On the Composition of *Paradise Lost*: A Study of the Ordering and Insertion of Material. By ALLAN H. GILBERT. Pp. x+185. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press; London: Geoffrey Cumberlege, 1948. \$3.50; 20s. net.

This is an attempt to investigate the process by which *Paradise Lost* grew to its final form. The accepted account of its composition derives from Edward Phillips, who says that it was begun after Milton became blind, adding that 'this Subject was first designed a Tragedy, and in the Fourth Book of the Poem there are Ten Verses, which several Years before the Poem was begun, were shewn to me, and some others, as designed for the very beginning of the said Tragedy'. Phillips's account is reported with more exact time references by Aubrey: 'He began about 2 years before the K. came in, and finished about 3 years after the K's Restauracion'; while Aubrey's note about the verses for the tragedy says, 'which Mr E. Ph. remembers, about 15 or 16 years before ever his Poem was thought of'. Phillips also states: 'I had the perusal of it [*Paradise Lost*] from the very beginning; for some years, as I went from time to time, to Visit him, in a Parcel of Ten, Twenty, or Thirty Verses at a Time.' On this evidence it has commonly been assumed that *Paradise Lost* was composed straightforwardly during the period 1658-63, though some have desired to stretch the period by a year or so; critics have, for instance, based their interpretations of the different quality of the last books of the poem on the unquestioned assumption that they were written last. Professor Gilbert now challenges this assumption. He refuses to believe that so long and laboured a work was written straight off as it stands. Apart from minor changes, such as verbal revisions and the insertion of after-thoughts (which everyone would allow as likely), he argues that the different parts of the poem were not written in the order in which they now stand; that large parts were originally written, like those ten verses cited by Phillips, for a tragedy on the subject; that in the first draft of the epic itself many of the main episodes came in a different order, and that some episodes and incidents were only invented when the poem took its final form. With such a process of composition, a process extending over twenty years and finally 'involving addition, excision and shifting of material by a blind man dependent on the eyes and brain of an amanuensis', we should expect inconsistencies in the poem, places where the need for alterations to fit other alterations has been overlooked. Such inconsistencies are the only evidence available, and the main part of Professor Gilbert's work consists of their investigation; but his whole argument proceeds from the hypothesis that Milton's epic is the reconstruction of a tragedy on the subject. He points out that Phillips's statement that Satan's address to the Sun was designed for the beginning of the tragedy implies a different disposition of the material from that of any of the four drafts for such a tragedy in the Trinity MS.; from this he infers not only that there was a fifth plan for a tragedy on the Fall but that 'in the "several years" between Phillips's sight of those ten lines and Milton's first work on the epic, much of the tragedy, or even all of it, was written according to the fifth plan'. This conjecture was first propounded by Peck in 1740. But it is only a conjecture: Professor Gilbert takes it as a basic assumption

from which to argue. He proceeds to ask and to answer the questions: what parts of *Paradise Lost* may once have been included in the tragedy of which Phillips saw the opening lines, how would these be expanded for the epic, what parts would appear for the first time in the epic and in what sequence? Some of the findings along Professor Gilbert's line of argument will be obvious enough: for instance, that Books 1, 2, and 3 belong wholly to the epic form and were therefore written later than much of Books 4, 9, 11, and 12, which belonged to the tragedy. But he further finds that in the first version of the epic the treatment was less full and the episodes were arranged in chronological order, thus: the action of the poem opened with the War in Heaven narrated by the poet instead of by Raphael (part of Book 5 and Book 6 without the Abdiel incidents and Christ's final intervention), followed by the Scene in Hell (Book I without the Pandemonium episode), Satan's Voyage through Chaos (Book 2 without the Council in Hell and the Sin and Death episode), Creation of the World (Book 7), Council in Heaven (Book 3, ll. 56-415 without the theological discourse), and so on.

The validity of these and other findings of Professor Gilbert rests, as I have said, entirely on the evidence of inconsistencies in the text that can best be explained as arising from some such process of composition as he conjectures. In his modest preface he admits that to some readers it 'will appear that the foundation is not enough to carry the superstructure'; and I must confess myself such a reader. It has been interesting and profitable to search the text of *Paradise Lost* under his tireless direction; but, although some of his 'inconsistencies' (e.g. items 18-20 and 31) are interesting and demand serious consideration, most are cleared up easily enough by a study of the text and some simply do not begin to exist. Professor Gilbert's purpose in fact makes him too suspicious and distorts his judgement; his reasoning is often strained and his interpretation of the text often demonstrably false. To take the first example that occurs, from his preliminary examination of the prose Arguments in relation to the text of the poem. He supposes that these Arguments were taken from a summary of the plot drawn up for the poet's guidance after the manner of the four drafts for the tragedy in the Trinity MS., and that this summary would have been altered in accordance with the successive alterations in the plan of the poem. He therefore scrutinizes the Arguments for discrepancies that will show the different strata of composition:

The Argument of Book I reads: 'To find out the truth of this Prophesie, and what to determin thereon he [Satan] refers to a full Councell,' and the rebel leader says:

These thoughts

Full Counsell must mature. (I. 659-60)

Yet there is no immediate discussion of the prophecy by a council of devils. *Refers to* means *brings before* and that is not done until Book II. The Argument continues: 'What his Associates thence attempt.' I find nothing in the poem to justify this. After Satan's speech, his followers draw their swords, rage against the Highest, and hurl defiance toward the vault of heaven. This is hardly attempting something.

Professor Gilbert concludes that the council in Book 2 is 'a later-devised substitute' for a council in Book I, the traces of which remain in the Argument. All

this is very perverse. *Refers to* does not of course mean *bring before*; and 'What his Associates thence attempt' is the building of Pandemonium for the council to which the matter is referred. Such wrenching of the text and invention of 'inconsistencies' occur all too frequently in Professor Gilbert's desperate search for his evidence. The plain fact is that there is not enough evidence there for his purpose. He has done well to call in question the old simple assumption that *Paradise Lost* was composed seriatim, but there are not enough faults in the structure for his ambitious attempt to discover the actual process of composition.

B. A. WRIGHT

Dr. Johnson and the Law. By SIR ARNOLD McNAIR, K.C. Pp. xii+116. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1948. 7s. 6d. net.

'Sir, the man who has vigour, may walk to the east just as well as to the west, if he happens to turn his head that way': so said Johnson in 1773, looking back on one of the missed turnings of his life. He himself had 'walked west', with vigour, in the direction of 'tragick poetry' because (he said) he 'had not money to study law'. If he had had the money, he implied, he might have made a very fine judge—just as Sir Isaac Newton, had he 'applied to poetry', could have made 'a very fine epic poem'. Johnson's friends supported him in this sanguine estimate of his own legal abilities, and Stowell himself suggested to him that it was a pity he had not followed the profession of the law: 'You might have been Lord Chancellor of Great Britain, and attained to the dignity of the peerage.' 'Lichfield L.C.' would indeed have been an interesting addition to the gallery of our Lord Chancellors—but Equity's gain would have been the world's loss, for the intensity of application demanded by such a career too often absorbs the faculties and contracts the mind, and Lord Lichfield could hardly have been in any sense so 'central' a figure of his age as was Dr. Johnson. None the less on more than one occasion Johnson, it seems, seriously considered embarking on the law as a profession, and he did not care to be reminded of the opportunities he missed: at Stowell's flattering remark he 'seemed much agitated; and, in an angry tone, exclaimed, "Why will you vex me by suggesting this, when it is too late?"'

Sir Arnold McNair has occupied such leisure as he has been able to snatch from his judicial avocations by compiling an interesting and scholarly collection of Johnson's many 'contacts' with the law and lawyers. He concludes his volume with a discussion of the topic touched on above: 'Why he did not become qualified to practice', and opens it with a survey of Johnson's legal friends and contemporaries. It is an odd commentary on contemporary reputations that an Aberdeenshire innkeeper should have said of Dr. Johnson: 'They say he's the greatest man in England, except Lord Mansfield'; and odder still that there should be no record of any meeting between these two celebrities. Sir Arnold draws attention to another surprising fact—that Boswell (no doubt from personal animosity) nowhere in the *Life* makes mention of Lord Eldon, with whom Johnson must have been well acquainted. He knew still better Stowell (whom he made an executor of his will) and Sir William Jones, the lovable and the learned, cut off in the flower of his age. All these were members of University College,

Oxford, and Johnson no doubt owed his acquaintance with them to Robert Chambers (later Chief Justice of Bengal), with whom he stayed regularly in Oxford, and whom he helped with his Vinerian Lectures.

But of course his most intimate acquaintance among lawyers was Boswell, and it is that relationship which affords material for a large part, and the most interesting part, of this book. For on a dozen or so occasions, in the course of his practice at the Scottish bar, Boswell, puzzled how to put his case, or doubtful upon what general principles of law or equity or ethics he should base it, turned to his respected friend and asked him for an argument. Usually the question was a pretty general one (though sometimes Johnson ventured among technicalities, such as the position of an *executor de son tort*), and the disquisitions quoted by Sir Arnold reveal Johnson's views on such topics as the limits of a schoolmaster's authority, the nature of 'heinous' sin, and the comparative seriousness of conjugal infidelity on the part of the husband and of the wife.

In two further chapters Sir Arnold gives us a general conspectus of Johnson's views on 'professional ethics and habits' and his 'comments on legal matters'. They reveal all the common sense and shrewd perception which characterize Johnson's utterances on life in general. And they remind us that in his day the line which divided lay from legal thinking and reasoning was far less firmly and clearly drawn than it is to-day—largely because the rationalizing, analytical work of Johnson's great coevals, Mansfield, Stowell, Eldon, and Blackstone, had not yet borne fruit.

JOHN SPARROW

Blake Studies. Notes on his Life and Works in seventeen chapters.

By GEOFFREY KEYNES. Pp. xiii+208, followed by 48 plates in collotype.
London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1949. 42s. net.

Dr. Keynes describes his book 'as an appendix, or a collection of appendixes, to Gilchrist and Mona Wilson, furnishing an elaboration of incidents or episodes in Blake's life, too detailed, perhaps, for inclusion in a balanced biography, with an occasional contribution to textual criticism and the canon of Blake's writings'. Since each study is separate and some of them are revised or extended versions of previous articles or prefaces, there is a little repetition, but their interest and importance are much greater than Dr. Keynes's modest description might suggest. The plates are very fine and most of them will be new to most readers of Blake. In briefly indicating the contents of the 'Studies' I have put figures in brackets after their titles to show the number of plates relating to each of them.

William and Robert (5) describes particularly Robert's sketchbook which was used for the drawing-lessons given him by William. *Blake's Notebook* (3), i.e. the 'Rosetti MS.', is based on Dr. Keynes's 1935 introduction to the facsimile reproduction of it. *Poetical Sketches* (1) is especially interesting on Blake's manuscript textual corrections in extant copies, and also gives an up-to-date census of extant copies. The number known is 22 as against 14 when the 1921 Bibliography was published. Of them 14 are in the U.S.A., 1 in New Zealand,

7 in Great Britain. *The Engraver's Apprentice* (6) fixes the date (4 August 1772) when Blake's apprenticeship to Basire began, shows how his work for Basire acquainted him with symbols which he used in later life, and clears up the mystery of the apparently mature style of Blake's first extant picture 'Joseph of Arimathea'. *Engravers called Blake* gives information about W. S. Blake, who has sometimes been confused with W. B. *Blake's Illustrations to Young's 'Night Thoughts'* (5) is an admirable introduction to a series not yet sufficiently studied. *Blake and the Wedgwoods* (3) deals with Blake's engraving of the Portland Vase and with his pathetic work in 1816 on pictures of a tureen and other table-ware. *A Descriptive Catalogue* (3) tells of the discovery in 1942 of a printed leaf (plate 25) advertising the Catalogue and gives a revised census of the 18 copies of the Catalogue now known. *William Blake with Charles Lamb and his Circle* (3) was a paper read to the Charles Lamb Society. Most of its contents are well known, but it is given a unique value by reproducing a long letter (in Lord Rothschild's possession) from Coleridge with the latter's views on 'Songs of Innocence and Experience', including graded marks for each poem. *Blake's Copper-Plates* includes 8 prints from a second set of electrotypes made in 1947 of the plates of 'Songs of Innocence and Experience'. *New Lines* from 'Jerusalem' (1) reproduces the eleven lines found on the frontispiece of 'Jerusalem' and adds an up-to-date census of copies of 'Jerusalem'. Incidentally it gives the exciting news that a facsimile in colour of Tatham's copy, with an introduction and commentary by Joseph Wicksteed, is now being prepared for publication in London. *The History of the 'Job' Designs* (5) gives the history of that great series both in Blake's lifetime and since. *The Blake-Linnell Documents* describes the pretty full evidence of Blake's pecuniary relations with Linnell, especially over 'Job'. This study exemplifies (but they all do) Dr. Keynes's gift for bringing out, in terms of human feeling and intercourse, the meaning of details which in other hands might have been mere dryasdust. *Blake's 'Job' on the Stage* gives an account of 'Job' as ballet (1931) with music by Vaughan Williams (1930). *Thornton's Virgil* (5) helps greatly with the appreciation of Blake's illustrations which are sometimes liable to suffer from their smallness (they were cut down) and also from over-dark and otherwise unclear reproduction. *The Pilgrim's Progress* deals with Blake's 28 designs, which were first published in 1941 and should now take their place with the other great series. Finally, *Remember Me!* tells first of Blake's contribution, an engraving of his 'Hiding of the infant Moses in the bulrushes', to this otherwise ephemeral Christmas book of Thornton's and, secondly, of another engraving perhaps intended for another 'Remember Me!' next year. There follow a good index and a bibliography of Dr. Keynes's writings on Blake.

Misprints are [plates] '3' and '4' for '4' and '3' (p. 11), 'twenty-one' for 'twenty-two' (p. 29), 'March 22, 1918' for 'March 22, 1910' (p. 35), 'has' for 'had' (p. 115), 'the Faithful' for 'Faithful' (p. 168), 'invin.' for 'inven.' (p. 189) and, perhaps, 'crouching' for 'couching' (p. 189). Solecisms are 'a juvenile audience' for 'juvenile readers' (p. 158), 'wonder grows at how' for 'wonder grows how' (p. 160), and 'decision as to whether' for 'decision whether' (p. 189). The sister who kept a look-out during the bulrush incident is described as sister

of Moses' father (p. 189), but this mistake about Miriam may be Miss Thornton's. Finally, there is a curious error (p. 14) in the description of the Rosetti MS. Sampson (1905) described it as made up of one gathering of 10 leaves and four gatherings of 16 and 8 leaves alternately. In Dr. Keynes's Bibliography (1921) '16 and 18' appear, presumably by a misprint, instead of '16 and 8'. This error reappears here. '16 and 18' is, of course, arithmetically impossible in a book of 58 leaves (116 pages).

It would be most ungracious to mention most of these *minutiae* except in the hope that their elimination in the next edition may make perfect a book which puts all Blake students under a further great obligation to its author. For my part I have read it with a sustained and sometimes fascinated interest and shall find it essential for future reference.

H. M. MARGOLIOUTH

Politics and the Press, c. 1780–1850. By A. ASPINALL. Pp. xv+511. London: Home & Van Thal, 1949. 42s. net.

Government always desires a good opinion of itself. The obvious way to secure this is to maintain an official paper on the one hand, and to suppress all adverse opinion on the other. In the England of 1780, however, all effort to make the official *London Gazette* an effective organ of propaganda had long been abandoned, and the tradition of the liberty of the Press was already so strong that all politicians, whatever their practice, at any rate paid lip service to it. Influence on the Press could only be exerted by indirect and secret means, and the relations between politicians and journalists, never openly acknowledged, were often extremely obscure. To write of them from 1780 to 1850 demands the widest knowledge of contemporary historical sources. All students of the history of journalism will be grateful that Professor Aspinall has devoted himself to this study. For his knowledge of the public archives and private correspondence of this period is unrivalled, and he has brought together a most impressive amount of new material.

Freedom to report parliamentary debates had been won in 1771. Fox's Libel Act, twenty-one years later, by increasing the sphere of the jury, 'rescued the press from servitude and oppression'. The increasing alarm caused by the revolutionary upheaval in France and the subsequent war brought on reaction. The restrictive legislation of 1798 and 1799 was followed by punitive increases in the stamp duty. When peace was won the violent tendencies of the radical movement at home provoked the repressive Six Acts, two of which definitely aimed at destroying the cheap radical Press. The failure of this legislation has already been studied by Mr. W. H. Wickwar in *The Struggle for the Freedom of the Press*. Professor Aspinall is mainly concerned to demonstrate that government could influence the Press by other means than by legislation.

Walpole's expenditure on the Press is well known. The Committee of Secrecy, which in 1742 investigated his whole conduct of the national finances, could find nothing reprehensible except his payments to journalists. These thus received a prominence out of all proportion to their importance, and the

effect of the Committee's report was undoubtedly to check government interference for a time. But *The History of The Times* disclosed that in 1789 John Walter accepted a subsidy of £300 a year for his infant journal. This was no isolated instance. The examples which Professor Aspinall has discovered are numerous enough to justify his statement that there were 'Gatton and Old Sarum newspapers as well as Gatton and Old Sarum boroughs'.

Of course many of the papers which offered their services to government were short-lived and insignificant. But there were papers of importance that were corruptible, and there are some fine instances of the differences between journalistic profession and practice. The original motto of *The Public Ledger* was 'Open to all parties, but influenced by none'. From 1788 to 1793 it was accepting £100 a year from the Treasury. In 1789 William Combe declared: 'Not all the power of ministers, or all the wealth of the Treasury, would tempt or bribe me to quit the shade of those woods where I was born.' Three years later £200 a year of Treasury money sufficed to bring him up to London. Secret service funds for press subsidies were, however, never unlimited, and tended to decrease. The abolition of sinecures further diminished this kind of pressure.

Official advertisements were given to the supporters of the Government and withdrawn from the opposition Press. In 1819, when it was criticizing the Six Acts, *The Times* received no advertisements from government offices although its circulation was much higher than that of any of its rivals, and some £5,000 a year of Treasury money was being spent in this way. This was an exceptional case, for official announcements were meant to be widely circulated. They could only be so if they were inserted in the most popular papers, whatever their political affiliations.

Government also subsidized papers and especially pamphlets by distributing them free and by persuading government offices to take them in. But the evidence with regard to newspapers is slight, and there was nothing comparable to Walpole's *Daily Gazetteer*

gratis-given Bland,
Sent with a Pass, and vagrant thro' the land.

Government papers were also helped by the prior release to them of news from official sources, and in all these shady methods the government of Ireland was a good deal more blatant than that of England. With the English provincial press government was very little concerned, but Professor Aspinall has some entertaining pages on Cumberland and Westmorland papers, based on material in the Lonsdale MSS. Wordsworth was deeply engaged in the Tory cause. In 1819 he reported that the Whig *Kendal Chronicle* had devoted four numbers to proving that he was a very bad poet, 'from which', he writes, 'I conclude that they do not much like me as a politician'.

It must be confessed that one lays down this book feeling rather like an inexperienced English climber who has just been taken up his first Alpine peak by an exacting and unrelenting guide. The scale is vast; the technique impressive. But severe pitch has succeeded severe pitch a little too rapidly, and one wishes that there had been one or two more halts to sit back and admire the view.

Especially one would like to look a little more closely at the economic side of newspaper growth. It was one of the many merits of the first volume of *The History of The Times* that in it technical progress and political development were perfectly integrated. Professor Aspinall rather under-emphasizes the change from the hand to the steam press which altered the whole character of the newspaper industry. His assertion that it was by advertisements alone that a newspaper's independence could be won and preserved is doubtless true of 1850, but would be difficult to prove in 1780. The abandonment of government subsidies is largely to be explained by the increasing size of the industry. A newspaper could be set up with a few hundred pounds in 1780. In 1831 Lord Lowther did not believe that 'an effective paper could be established to enter into competition with *The Times* under £30,000'. No government, and even less, no party in opposition could contemplate expenditure on this scale. Moreover, the proprietor of a newspaper printed on a steam press was engaged in a long-term capital enterprise. He could not afford to tie himself too obviously to a government whose subsidy might well be terminated by the whim of the electorate at the next general election.

To win elections was indeed the primary object of all newspaper subsidy. It is a pity that Professor Aspinall could not have devoted more space to this topic, for he is at his best when writing of Brougham's unsuccessful attack on the Lowther interest in Cumberland and Westmorland. But it would be ungracious to complain of short measure in this most substantial volume. It is the interest and pioneer character of the book which suggest so many profitable lines of future research.

L. W. HANSON

Ideas and Beliefs of the Victorians; an Historic Revaluation of the Victorian Age. Pp. 448. London: Sylvan Press, 1949. 21s. net.

A comprehensive judgement on this volume is hardly possible here; in two respects it is of a kind which spreads beyond the natural confines of this journal.

First, what contribution it makes belongs not to literary criticism proper but to the history of ideas (and its poor relation the history of taste and fashion); ideas about progress, democracy, and science, and ideas considered on the whole not 'in and for themselves' but for their relevance to twentieth-century problems. From such a book the student of Victorian literature might hope for at least incidental revaluation of those writers who articulated, disseminated, or were moulded by such ideas—which is to say, all the great figures of the period; he might also hope for substantial assistance from experts in other fields on the special contexts of such ideas. The first hope is unfulfilled. No essay deals particularly with any great literary figure. The fifty-one contributors include only one who is primarily a literary critic (Lord David Cecil). The index, if there were one, would indeed lead the reader to passing references to the major novelists and poets (drawn upon chiefly for evidence of 'unbelief'), to some accounts of Macaulay, Newman, and Ruskin (optimism, tractarianism, and social conscience); Carlyle, however, would barely appear. The second hope would be

better satisfied and is indeed the book's justification, though the chronological foreshortening and lack of reasonable or systematic grouping are a handicap. But Mr. John Summerson on the Crystal Palace; Monsignor Ronald Knox on Newman, Fr. Copleston on Herbert Spencer, Mr. Gordon Rupp on the Nonconformists, Mr. G. M. Young on the Liberal mind, and the contributors on geology, archaeology, and anthropology stand out as adding to knowledge or illumination, despite their brief allowance of space.

The other cause which obstructs judgement lies in the origins of the volume. It is not a survey or even an edited miscellany; it is the text (more or less; what is the substantive text of a broadcast talk?) of eighty-odd short talks given early in 1948. As the souvenir programme of an outstanding event in broadcasting history it has of course other values, which cannot be considered here. But its origins limit its usefulness as a book. Seen together, the talks are too brief, too numerous, above all, too uncoordinated. The majority of them are really introductory; moods, strands, attitudes, outlooks, are the words that recur in the titles. Mr. Harman Grisewood's foreword indicates the length and seriousness of the planning of the whole project; but the planning seems not to have extended to the actual content of the talks, and perhaps also some important features of the original plan were shelved. (If 'certain persons, their lives, letters and conversations' had in fact been used, it would have been an advantage; the book as it stands lacks a solid core of evidence.) Or perhaps there is a flaw at the heart of the plan. 'The listener should not feel that he was being invited to attend a course of studies', says Mr. Grisewood. Why not? It is partly the fear of being academic in system, substance, and style that prevents this patchy, sketchy, often stimulating book from being in fact 'an historic revaluation of the Victorian age'. But it contains much material which will in fact contribute to such a revaluation, and the number and weight of the contributors testifies to the amount of serious work that is being done in this field.

KATHLEEN TILLOTSON

Essays in the History of Ideas. By ARTHUR O. LOVEJOY. Pp. xviii+360. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1948; London: Geoffrey Cumberlege, 1949. \$5.00; 27s. 6d. net.

The History of Ideas Club at Johns Hopkins, which studies the role in Western thought of 'general philosophical conceptions, ethical ideas, and aesthetic fashions', has celebrated its twenty-fifth birthday by asking an eminent founder-member to gather together a sheaf of his studies. Most of these have been published before in learned journals, but they include several of Professor Lovejoy's most fruitful investigations and are worth reprinting. They are 'excursions, or border-raids, of a philosopher into provinces—chiefly of literary history—in which he is not a specialist' (p. xvii), and philosophers, it is claimed, 'suffer from a morbid solicitude to know what they are talking about' (p. 232). The book is defined by those points of reference as being historical, semi-philosophical, and analytic, and it tries with learning and energy to make intellectual history more extensive in scope and more exact in detail.

As a philosopher, Mr. Lovejoy feels that students of intellectual history (whether its substance be literature, aesthetics, or sociology) should be trained in the history of philosophy and the methods of philosophical analysis. There is therefore a marked bias throughout these papers and it is not primarily literary: it is a bias for scrutinizing 'ideas' almost as if they were self-existent organisms 'with long life-histories of their own' (p. 9), living in their own world of abstractions. This is perhaps why one feels, along with admiration, a good deal of uneasiness and ultimately even of rebellion. But lest this seem unfair let the admiration be admitted first.

In the first place, the book seeks to substitute large fruitful studies for small barren ones, partly by advocating scholarly collaboration, and partly by encouraging greater semantic expertness. It brings to its advocacy both a breadth of learning and a skill in analysis which verge on the formidable, and a stimulating sense that much clutter is being cleared away. The powers of definition which enable it to do this are pre-eminently shown in the well-known essays 'Nature' as Aesthetic Norm', 'On the Discrimination of Romanticisms', and 'The First Gothic Revival', where the twists of extremely slippery subjects are skilfully plotted for all to see.

In the second place, Mr. Lovejoy's apparent omniscience is, if somewhat intimidating, at least an assurance that perspectives are being taken back a long way towards their origins. He seems to have learned everything and forgotten nothing. His range is from the early Christian Fathers to the early nineteenth century—and indeed, in the bibliography of his publications, from Buddhist technical terms and Greek physiology to Bergson and Dumbarton Oaks. With such equipment he can proceed with confidence to his three main kinds of problem—the recurrence through history of certain 'unit-ideas', the role in thought and taste of semantic complexities, and the vulnerability of thinkers to mental incoherence and incongruity. His ability as an intellectual cartographer is phenomenal.

Why then the uneasiness? It is partly that all this is intended very much for specialists, though he defines a 'unit-idea' as 'thoughts concerning particular aspects of *common experience*' (p. 9—my italics): the whole feeling is that of advanced graduate studies turned in upon themselves. It is partly, too, that he positively hungers for a heavy overlay of literature by commentary. Admittedly, to understand fully any crucial passage in Milton one would need help from more than one kind of scholar, but it is true also that Mr. Lovejoy seems to call for the Furness or Verity habit of mind to the last degree. He claims that Milton would thereby gain 'a great enrichment of interest—an increase, so to say, of *voluminosity*' (p. 5). In fact, any literary study might become immensely voluminous, without reaping much profit thereby. But if this objection be over-ruled as an insoluble dilemma of scholarship, or even heresy against the value of knowledge, there remains one complaint more. It is that this graphing and mapping of abstractions seems to dehumanize its subjects altogether. Perhaps this is inevitably the philosopher's approach (but is it, really?), yet one is troubled not only by the 'rather unlovely terms' which he himself admits (p. 79), but by the lack of literary feeling. One recalls Q's impish 'Short History

of English Literature', with its revivals and declines, its schools and trends. One thinks of its

Naturalism (*alias* Wordsworth), mysticism (*alias* Coleridge), deism (*alias* Shelley), the revolutionary spirit (*alias* Byron), and sensuous naturalism (*alias* Keats). Exhaustion of tendencies.¹

and of Bateson's too-optimistic comment on it that 'the -isms and -ations are utterly and finally discredited'.² And then one feels that though Mr. Lovejoy is rightly unhappy about the loose definition of the -isms, the way to make him happy would simply be to define them better. At the end of the 'Discrimination of Romanticisms' essay occurs this passage:

The categories which it has become customary to use in distinguishing and classifying 'movements' in literature or philosophy and in describing the nature of the significant transitions which have taken place in taste and opinion are far too rough, crude, undiscriminating. (p. 253)

True enough; but can one feel reassured simply by the proposal to make the categories more accurate, more efficient? Can one cure the disease (the horrible nominalism of trends and -ations) just by organizing its symptoms coherently? Abstract conceptions must be discussed, but Sprague Allen or Steegman on 'Gothick', Willey on 'Nature', or Sutherland on Augustan conventions³ have shown how such things can be described in human terms, without the shadow of an exclusively learned audience eagerly astrain, brows furrowed, pencils sharpened, and eyes alight with co-operative scholarship. This book is valuable for reference, but is hardly as 'digestible and nutritious for non-philosophers' (p. 8) as one would like.

A. R. HUMPHREYS

English Institute Essays, 1947. Pp. x+202. New York: Columbia University Press; London: Geoffrey Cumberlege, 1948. \$2.50; 14s. net.

Scholarship fares better than criticism in this collection. The latter is represented by three essays. William Carlos Williams gives a meandering 'Approach to the Poem'; it appears that American poets can learn something very important from Whitman, but we can't yet say what it will be. In 'Myth as Literature', Richard Chase makes a start on defining 'myth' as a critical term rather more closely than has been usual, but he has too little space to develop his views. He writes perceptively on Wordsworth's 'Resolution and Independence'. The companion piece, 'The Modern Myth of the Modern Myth', by Donald A. Stauffer moves on the level of stock complaint about 'the great modern spiritual vacuum'. The most specific pages deal with Yeats as a myth-maker, but say little new.

Of the more scholarly papers, all but one are semi-popular. M. M. Mathews

¹ Quiller-Couch, *Studies in Literature* (Cambridge, 1924), i. 86.

² *English Poetry and the English Language* (Oxford, 1934), p. 2.

³ *Tides in English Taste* (Cambridge, Mass., 1937); *The Rule of Taste* (London, 1936); *The Eighteenth-Century Background* (London, 1940); and *A Preface to Eighteenth-Century Poetry* (Oxford, 1948), respectively.

on 'Problems Encountered in the Preparation of a Dictionary of American Words and Meanings' is the most successful in giving the layman some insight into the kind of problems that the scholar has to face. Giles E. Dawson on 'Copyright of Plays in the Early Seventeenth Century' also writes lucidly with well-chosen illustrations. The two Shakespeare essays, by M. A. Shaaber and Matthew W. Black on editorial problems of text and interpretation respectively, are by comparison disappointing. The examples do not build up into a living picture of what an editor has to do. Shaaber makes one pernicious suggestion: that there is 'room for an edition which would reproduce the most authoritative text of each play with no editing at all except to correct undoubted mistakes and make good undoubted omissions. This would serve chiefly as a convenient substitute for facsimiles.' There is no honest half-way house between an exact reproduction (preferably in facsimile) and a critical edition; the word 'undoubted' begs all the editorial questions; so, often, does 'most authoritative'.

The one specialist paper, 'The First Quarto of *Titus Andronicus*', by Hereward T. Price, is valuable, though it is even more limited in scope than the title suggests, and deals only with spelling. The two main topics are metrical spellings and miscellaneous, possibly Shakespearian, spellings. The discussion of the spellings of the -ed ending of the verb needs careful checking with the text. On p. 143 Price quotes as 'feminine endings' five verbs of which only two can possibly be so—in the other three the -ed is the normal (masculine) ending of a decasyllabic line—and one even of these two (v. i. 107) reads better at the end of an Alexandrine. Again in writing that 'Shakespeare usually writes -ed after w, and sometimes after u', he makes no attempt to sort out the instances in which the -ed must be syllabic from those in which it cannot be, and those which are ambiguous. All three classes are represented in his list. His metrical sense is throughout rather unreliable. He complains that in v. iii. 98:

Were they that murdred our Emperours brother,

editors read 'murdered' 'against what I think was Shakespeare's intention'. True, there is no need to alter the spelling, but that is because it already conveys the same trisyllabic pronunciation as it would with the e added. In v. iii. 71:

This scattered corne into one mutuall sheaffe,

the -ed is described as 'against the meter', which is untrue unless it means simply 'varying from the decasyllabic norm'. Later, the similar line, *Hamlet* (Q 2) i. i. 164:

So hallowed, and so gratiouſ is that time,

is rightly described as evidence for Shakespeare's rhythmic preference.

Nothing conclusive emerges from the search for specifically Shakespearian spellings in the *Titus Quarto*, and some of the individual words cited, such as 'P (= ay), are so common as to be not worth listing. But in spite of its defects, the essay will be useful to all who are interested in *Titus*, and ought to make readers and editors more alert to the possibility that unexpected spellings represent deliberate metrical effects.

J. C. MAXWELL

SHORT NOTICES

Two Seventeenth-Century Prefaces. Richard Whitlock *Zootomia 1654* and Nathaniel Fairfax *A Treatise of the Bulk and Selvedge of the World 1674*. Edited by A. K. CROSTON. Pp. xi+51. Liverpool: University Press of Liverpool; London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1949. 3s. 6d. net.

These two prefaces form No. 3 of the Liverpool Reprints which are being produced under the general editorship of Professor L. C. Martin.

Mr. Croston would be the first to acknowledge that neither Whitlock nor Fairfax are of much importance; although it is often from the lesser, rather than the greater, writers that we can learn about trends and movements in such matters as style. Mr. McCrea Hazlett of Chicago University has projected a full edition of *Zootomia*. In the meantime these prefaces are reprinted as 'two significant varieties of seventeenth-century prose style'; and it is perhaps only as such that they are of value detached from the texts which they introduce. Mr. Croston gives short accounts of what is known of both authors, and supplies notes where necessary. He is well aware that after, as well as before, the Restoration many styles existed; but he is inclined to accept too readily the view that the 'plain' style was rather closely associated with the Royal Society. He refers to Mr. R. F. Jones's two well-known articles, but does not mention Professor A. H. Nethercote's reply in 'Concerning Cowley's Prose Style' in *P.M.L.A.*, Sept. 1931.

If one examines the list of books published with the authority of the Society in the twenty years or so following its incorporation one finds very little evidence that the writers did, in fact, pay much attention to the principles laid down in Sprat's section on the members' 'manner of discourse' in his *History of 1667*. Many of the books were in Latin; and except for Evelyn's *Sylva*, which was somewhat old-fashioned in style, it is difficult to name any volume which could have directly influenced prose in general. The view that the Society was important in this respect seems to have arisen in the 1890's, perhaps from some remarks by Walter Raleigh, when he held the Chair of English at Liverpool [see his *The English Novel* (1894)]. At any rate, the belief finds no countenance in such books as Earle's *English Prose* (1890). However, the object of such a series as the Liverpool Reprints is to make rare books available; and these two prefaces are welcome to students of the seventeenth century.

HUGH MACDONALD

An Essay on the Regulation of the Press. By DANIEL DEFOE. Introduction by JOHN ROBERT MOORE. Pp. xvi+29 (Luttrell Reprints No. 7). Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1948.

Following Tutchin's attack upon the Occasional Conformity Bill, the House of Commons on 15 December 1703 forbade news-writers 'to intermeddle with the Debates, or any other Proceedings of this House' and ordered a Bill prepared 'to restrain the Licentiousness of the Press'. The Bill was prepared but was allowed to languish and die after passing first and second readings on 13 and 18 January 1703/4. Meanwhile, on 7 January, Defoe, who had recently been released from Newgate for writing the *Shortest Way*, issued his *Essay on the Regulation of the Press*. It is somewhat repetitious but vigorous and effective.

Like Milton, Defoe took his stand on high ground in defence of liberty and learning. He granted that the Press needed regulating. No other Christian nation would have permitted without public censure such books as 'Coward against the Immortality of the Soul; — on Poligamy; — against the Trinity . . . and abundance more tending to Atheism, Heresie, and Irreligion. . . .' But the proposal to revive licensing, which makes the Press the tool of the party in power, he denounced as unworthy of a body elected to preserve rather than take away the liberties of the people. Even the king of France has never been so arbitrary. Thanks to Richelieu and the Academy, learning has been so

encouraged there that all useful books now speak French, and a man may read the world's masterpieces without knowing a word of Greek or Latin.

The proper way to regulate the Press, Defoe tells us, is to draw up a list of forbidden topics and specify the punishment for violation. Then writers will know when they transgress and not have their work indicted under a general charge of scandal and sedition. Such a procedure would require a man to put his name to his book or make the printer and seller responsible for it, and thus stop the wicked practice of pirating books.

The *Essay*, of which only five copies are known (two defective and all in America), is reprinted from the copy in the library of Indiana University. Professor John Robert Moore has prepared the text and written a competent introduction explaining the background of the *Essay* and the way in which it was hurried into print.

A. W. SECORD

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By A. MACDONALD

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